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ABSTRACT

Intended as a tool for school district personnel as they develop competency-based education programs for English composition, this document presents objectives and guidelines for improving composition quality and instruction. The chapters cover the following topics: (1) the writing process, (2) the relationship between the writing process and competency-based education requirements, (3) writing experiences, (4) writing and cognitive development, (5) developing prompts for writing experiences, (6) evaluating compositions, (7) planning for district-wide evaluation of compositions, (8) grading and reporting to parents, (9) pupil performance objectives and writing experiences, and (10) program evaluation. A nine-page bibliography is included; the appendix contains a self-appraisal checklist for evaluating writing programs. (EL)

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FOREWORD

Ohio's educators have traditionally worked hard to provide the best possible education for their students. The activity to improve education in Ohio during the past several years has been remarkable. Public and nonpublic schools have made great strides in implementing the Minimum Standards for Elementary and Secondary Schools.

Numerous teachers and administrators have commented on the utility of the Ohio Department of Education's implementation series consisting of fourteen documents that have been available since 1983. These publications have been found to be a great help in designing educational programs that not only meet the requirements of standards, but enable schools to consider various ways in which to provide quality education.

As educators continue to seek to provide excellence throughout their programs, there have been many inquiries about other parts of the standards not addressed by the implementation series. The department has identified areas of most common concern and has prepared this leadership series consisting of nine documents. As was the case with most of the documents in the original implementation series, the leadership series serves to specify the requirements of standards. Additional information, guidelines, procedural steps, and sample forms may be presented that go beyond what the standards require. The purpose is to provide information to help schools plan to meet their needs and provide the best possible education for their students.

The assistance of school personnel who contributed their time, expertise, and materials is greatly appreciated. Recognition and sincere thanks are extended to the department staff members who worked to make these publications possible.

Franklin B. Walter

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Acknowledgments		5
Introduction		6
CHAPTER I.	**THE WRITING PROCESS**	7
	Objectives	7
	Introduction	7
	Prewriting in the Writing Process	8
	Drafting in the Writing Process	10
	Responding in the Writing Process	10
	Revising in the Writing Process	11
	Editing in the Writing Process	12
	Evaluating in the Writing Process	12
	Publishing in the Writing Process	12
	Complex Nature of the Writing Process	12
CHAPTER II.	**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WRITING PROCESS AND COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**	14
	Objectives	14
	Questioning to Improve Compositions	16
	Conferencing to Improve Compositions	16
	Available Resources for Learning More about the Writing Process	17
CHAPTER III.	**WRITING EXPERIENCES**	18
	Objectives	18
	Classifications of Writing Styles	18
	Types of Writing	19
	Writing for Different Purposes and Different Audiences from Different Roles	20
	System for Analyzing Writing Assignments	20
	Classroom Factors that Enhance Writing	20
CHAPTER IV.	**WRITING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**	22
	Objective	22
	Student Development in Writing	22
	General Order of Solving Problems	22
	Writing Development Research	25

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER V. **DEVELOPING PROMPTS FOR WRITING EXPERIENCES** 28
Objective 28
Definition of a Prompt 28
Prompts for Classroom Use versus Districtwide Testing 29
Characteristics of Good Prompts 29
Procedures to Evaluate Prompts 31

CHAPTER VI. **EVALUATING COMPOSITIONS** 35
Objective 35
Quantitative versus Qualitative Features of Good Writing 35
Formative Evaluation Procedures for Classroom Use 36
Summative Evaluation Procedures for Districtwide Testing and Classroom Use ... 37
Major Evaluation Scales 37
Essay Scales 37
Primary Trait Scales 40
Analytic Scales 45
Diagnostic Scales 48
Evaluation Procedures for the Classroom 50
Checklists 50
Dichotomous Scales 52
Feature Analysis Scales 53
Other Scales 54
Limitations of Essay Evaluations 58
Advantages of Holistic Scoring 58

CHAPTER VII. **PLANNING FOR DISTRICTWIDE EVALUATION OF COMPOSITIONS** ... 59
Objective 59
Planning for Large-Scale Evaluation 59
Multiple-Choice Tests versus Writing Samples 61
Cost Factors 62
Reliability Factors Relative to Composition Readings 63
Using Computers to Report Results of Holistic Evaluations of Compositions 65
Number of Evaluation Scales to be Developed 68

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Evaluation Scales Change Over Time 68
Usefulness of District Handbook on Evaluating Compositions. 68

CHAPTER VIII. **GRADING AND REPORTING TO PARENTS** 75
Objective 75
Grading Compositions in Process 75
Grading in an Integrated Program 76

CHAPTER IX. **PUPIL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES AND WRITING EXPERIENCES** 77
Objective 77
Pupil Performance Objectives for Writing Samples 77
Pupil Performance Objectives for Multiple-Choice Tests 79
Individualized Skill Instruction Within Compositions 79

CHAPTER X. **PROGRAM EVALUATION** 80
Objective 80
Resources 80
Summary 81

Bibliography 82

Appendix. Self-Appraisal Checklist for Evaluating Writing Programs 91

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The writing process has been clearly demonstrated as a group of effective techniques for improving composition quality. The writing process requires adequate training, time to build confidence in using it, and support and understanding from administrators. The transition from teaching traditional grammar to instructing in composition skills should be made not only carefully and slowly but also steadily.

Purposes of this document are to

- give a brief description of the writing process
- demonstrate relationships between assessment and intervention requirements and the writing process
- identify types of writing experiences students need
- relate child growth and development information to writing development
- assist in creating meaningful writing assignments
- identify characteristics of good writing
- provide information relative to developing evaluation scales for English composition
- develop awareness of various assessment techniques used for districtwide testing and in classrooms to improve composition skills
- recommend procedures for districtwide evaluation of writing samples
- develop awareness of grading procedures during the writing process
- provide examples of pupil performance objectives that promote writing
- provide a list of resources for program evaluation

This document should be a valuable tool for school district personnel as they continue developing competency-based education programs for English composition.

THE WRITING PROCESS

CHAPTER I
THE WRITING PROCESS

OBJECTIVES

EDUCATORS WILL COMPREHEND THE WRITING PROCESS.

EDUCATORS WILL UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WRITING PROCESS AND COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.

INTRODUCTION

Composition instruction has undergone a revolution: it is called the writing process. This more positive approach shifts the primary focus from correctness to acceptance of students' ideas and enhancement of idea development. This shift in instructional approach requires educators to rethink, reevaluate, and realign procedures and values held relative to teaching and evaluating composition.

Educators believed that learning the separate skills of spelling, vocabulary, capitalization, punctuation, and grammatical usage would result in quality writing. By teaching those skills educators have enabled students to perform well on tests measuring the skills separately. The 1979 National Assessment of Educational Progress revealed that seventy-five percent of students tested for language skills responded with adequate scores on short-answer, multiple-choice items. When the same students, however, were asked to write an essay, only twelve and one-half percent of the essays were judged to be adequate.

WHAT IS THE WRITING PROCESS?

The writing process is a set of procedures for achieving good writing. It requires the student to develop and organize ideas into effective patterns using a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary appropriate to the topic. Good writing is accomplished through prewriting activities and writing several preliminary drafts before a composition is considered finished.

PREWRITING

The writing process has been widely researched in the past decade. Research indicates that to improve composition skills students (1) **must write** and (2) **must receive specific instruction about ways to improve their compositions.** The writing process requires more individualized instruction, new ways of grading, and different approaches to evaluating compositions.

In the Implementation Series document *Intervention* (Ohio Department of Education, 1983a), the writing process is more fully delineated. It is identified as consisting of the following:

Prewriting
Writing/Drafting
Responding
Revising
Editing
Evaluating
Publishing

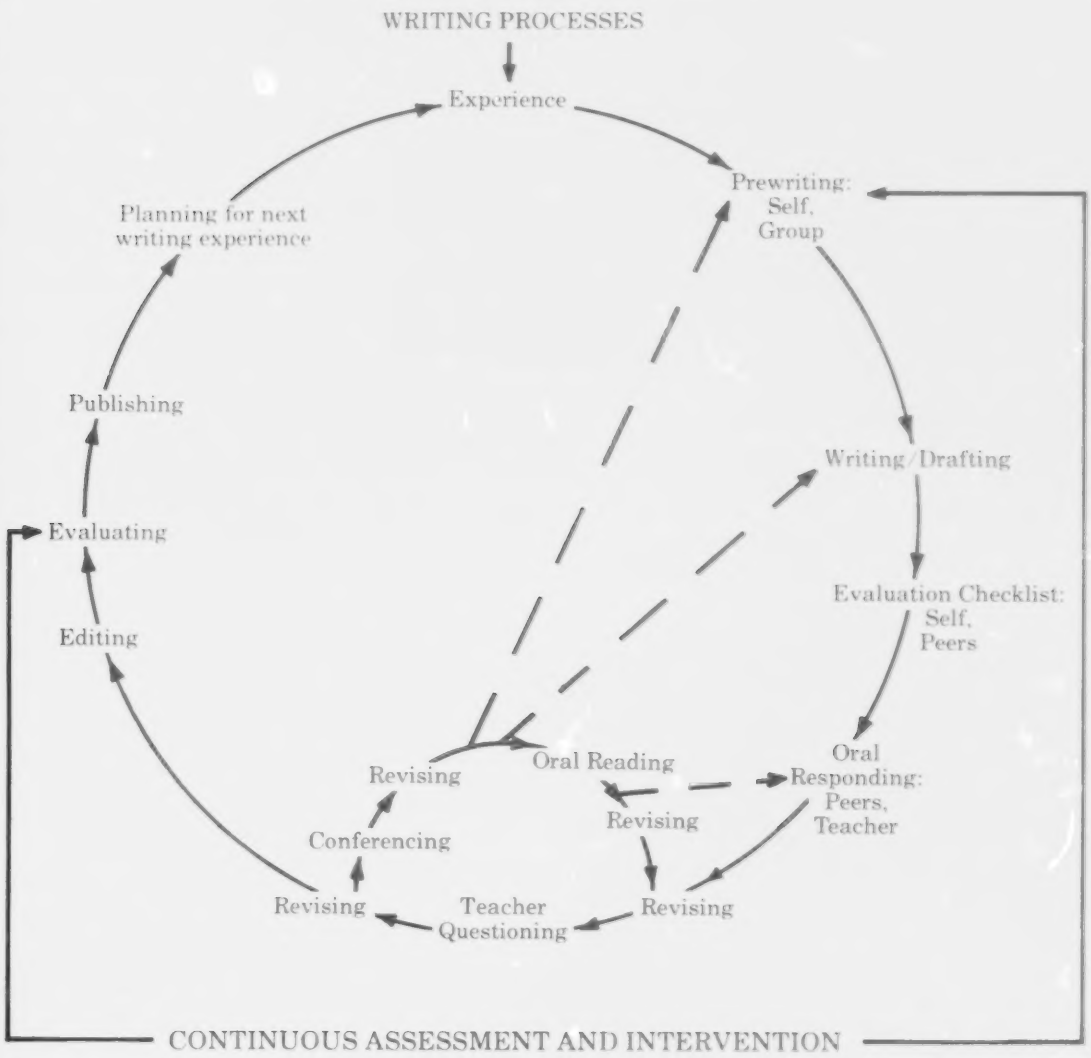
As shown in Figure 1, the writing process is recursive in nature—not lockstep. The recursive nature of the writing process is noted when students are observed going back to prewriting to enhance development of a particular idea. The dotted lines in Figure 1 represent apparently random student moves from one point to another. Upon analysis of such moves, however, researchers find logical patterns occurring. The number of possible moves from one point to another exceeds the three shown. Through an initial composition assignment, each student's problems in composing are revealed. The teacher must prioritize individual instruction relative to the student's revealed needs. At any time a student may be working on a different concern with each of several compositions in his/her portfolio. Each problem must be dealt with separately within its own writing context. The writing process increases opportunities to provide specific instruction relative to a student's writing needs.

PREWRITING IN THE WRITING PROCESS

Prewriting serves as a catalyst for students to begin thinking about the potential of a topic, how it can be developed, and how it can be handled creatively. Oral language experiences shared during prewriting sessions release thoughts from other students' memories. The oral experiences enable students to be creative and to approach topics with fresh and different ideas, avoiding the traps of triteness, blandness, and cliches. Students generate words and phrases which may then be categorized, classified, webbed, or mapped; some words and phrases are discarded as not being useful.

PREWRITING

Figure 1. **Recursive Nature of the Writing Process**



The oral experience is a brainstorming session based upon a topic chosen from student experience. Words, phrases, and ideas are contributed by students and written down. Questions are asked by students and teacher, and relevant information is discussed. This technique may be used when beginning and when revising a composition.

About twenty-five kinds of prewriting activities have been identified at this time in the professional literature. Each provides a different approach to generating ideas.

RESPONDING

DRAFTING IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The first draft of a composition is generated from the list of words and phrases students create in prewriting activities. Oftentimes first drafts are exploratory in that students "discover" what it is they want to say about the topic. Later drafts expand upon discovered ideas.

Students or peers may use checklists to determine if certain desired features are present in their drafts, e.g., "Is a topic sentence included for each paragraph?" Depending upon students' needs, teacher expectations, and writing requirements, checklists may be unnecessary. Instead peers and teacher may respond orally to the first draft.

RESPONDING IN THE WRITING PROCESS

Responding is a process that provides feedback for students about the progress of their compositions. Response may be given by the teacher, student peers, parent volunteers, or others. It is essential to the English language arts learning process that student peer groups respond to each other's writings. **Teachers must take the time to train responders in positive feedback techniques.** Training techniques are outlined in the Bay Area Writing Project booklet titled *Using Student Response Groups in the Classroom* (Healy, 1971).

Checklists, written comments, face-to-face oral comments, or cassette recordings are means for providing response. All responses to composition drafts are based upon an established criteria derived from the course of study. Response must begin with positive statements about the writing. At least one constructive criticism is offered to give direction for the next draft.

Responses are the means of intervention for individual students. Drafts of all compositions should be found in an accessible location. These compositions show the students' strengths and intervention needs. Written notes must be kept of each student's progress. From these notes teachers begin asking students pertinent questions about their compositions. Such questions are stated to develop a questioning attitude within the student. Teachers modeling the questioning technique train students to analyze their own writing and work toward improvement.

Teachers should be able to meet with students at least once every two weeks to discuss their progress and needs. This conferencing is important to developing questioning techniques. **TEACHERS HAVE IDENTIFIED CONFERENCING AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE PART OF THE WRITING PROCESS.**

REVISING

STUDENTS NEED TIME TO DEVELOP THEIR COMPOSITIONS. Using various response and revision techniques improves their writing. Students may want to read their compositions aloud to themselves or others. By reading aloud students use oral language skills to analyze their written language skills. Many times students hear mistakes they do not see in the writing. Common errors are frequently errors of haste or carelessness. A quick rereading may reveal to the student such errors without the teacher having to point them out.

REVISING IN THE WRITING PROCESS

Revising a composition leads to consecutive drafts. Each revision provides opportunities for students to elaborate ideas touched upon briefly in the previous draft. They add discovered related ideas to strengthen position statements, delete unrelated ideas, and improve form and correctness of the written language. Revision follows any of the above response types (oral comments, checklists, written comments, questions, conferences). Students use constructive criticism to revise and improve the quality of each draft.

Not all drafts will need to be completed or evaluated, but students should continue to improve drafts for as long as they continue to make progress and are interested in a topic. If redrafting decreases the quality of the writing, work on that paper should cease for a while or stop altogether. It is important not to confuse revising with rewriting, which is recopying in better handwriting.

Word processors with printers provide a vital service for students as they work through the revision process. They enable students to reread and review the composition, facilitating needed changes. Research has shown that writers must *see* their work to revise it. Printouts of each draft enable writers to reread, evaluate, and revise writings without the tedious, time-consuming work of rewriting by hand. Use of word processors in the English language arts classroom is discussed more fully in *English Language Arts Curriculum*, (1985a).

EDITING

EDITING IN THE WRITING PROCESS

Editing is that point in the writing process when students, having completed the revision process, make a specific effort to correct any errors in the conventions of writing. Although students may have corrected spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammatical usage during the revision process, they now make a direct, concerted effort to check for these types of errors. Within the context of their own writing, students apply capitalization, punctuation, grammatical usage, spelling, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference, consistent verb tense, and so forth. Here is where they apply left-brain knowledge to right-brain creations. Within the context of their own writing, desired form and correctness are learned.

EVALUATING IN THE WRITING PROCESS

Evaluating as shown in Figure 1 is that moment when a grade must be established for the composition. **Students should always know beforehand what criteria are used for grading.** Students are expected to continue to revise until a grade has been assigned to a composition or until a decision is made with the teacher to set it aside. Further revision is not expected after a grade has been assigned. For more discussion relative to grading see pages 75 and 76.

PUBLISHING IN THE WRITING PROCESS

Publishing makes public students' writings and fulfills the need writers have for an audience. Publication takes many forms—reading to peers, developing books for a room library, creating a literary magazine, and so forth. Teachers are creative in discovering ways to publish students' writings.

COMPLEX NATURE OF THE WRITING PROCESS

Writing is a complex process requiring thought, exploration, and discovery. Cooper and Odell (1977) describe the writing process in the following manner:

> Composing involves exploring and mulling over a subject; planning the particular piece (with or without notes or outline); getting started; making discoveries about feelings, values, or ideas, even while in the process of writing a draft; making continuous decisions about diction, syntax, and rhetoric in relation to the intended meaning and to the meaning taking shape; reviewing what has accumulated, and anticipating and rehearsing what comes next; tinkering and reformulating; stopping; contemplating the finished piece and perhaps, finally, revising. This complex, unpredictable, demanding activity is what we call the writing process [page xi].

COMPLEX NATURE

The complexity of the writing process is so great that Graves (1983) suggests **teachers should start slowly with the writing process incorporating one step at a time as they feel comfortable with it.** Hall's outline (1981) of the complexity of the writing process is illustrated in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2. **The Complexity of the Writing Process**

Stage	*Skills*	*Tasks*
Prewriting	Thinking	decide to communicate in written form explain the matter to oneself form tentative plan for writing identify target audiences identify style or writing necessary for purpose (narrative, expository, persuasive) discover ideas, generalizations, theme, topic narrow topic appropriately develop topic sentence or main ideas select relevant facts, examples, details from experience or research
	Organization	sequence general content of message group related ideas omit irrelevant ideas sequence ideas (chronological, spatial, logical, etc.) state conclusion or summary
Writing	Language Skills (Vocabulary and Sentence Structure)	choose appropriate vocabulary for purpose and audience level arrange vocabulary in meaningful sentences using correct grammatical relationships vary selection of sentence types
	Spelling Skills	discriminate the sounds and sequence of sounds in words recall the shape and form of letters recall the shape and form of non-phonetic words
	Handwriting	sequence the appropriate motor movements to write letters and words
	Mechanics	include proper punctuation, capitalization
Post-Writing	**Editing** and Revising	*content editing* read the written message identify gaps in presentation identify need for additional facts, details, examples clarify main idea and relationships between ideas delete irrelevant material add appropriate transitional phrases refine word choice *structure editing* revise awkward sentences combine simple sentences correct tense use

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

CHAPTER II

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WRITING PROCESS AND COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

OBJECTIVES

EDUCATORS WILL PERCEIVE THAT THE WRITING PROCESS MEETS COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.

EDUCATORS WILL USE THE WRITING PROCESS AS A SET OF INTERVENTION STRATEGIES.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WRITING PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION REQUIREMENTS?

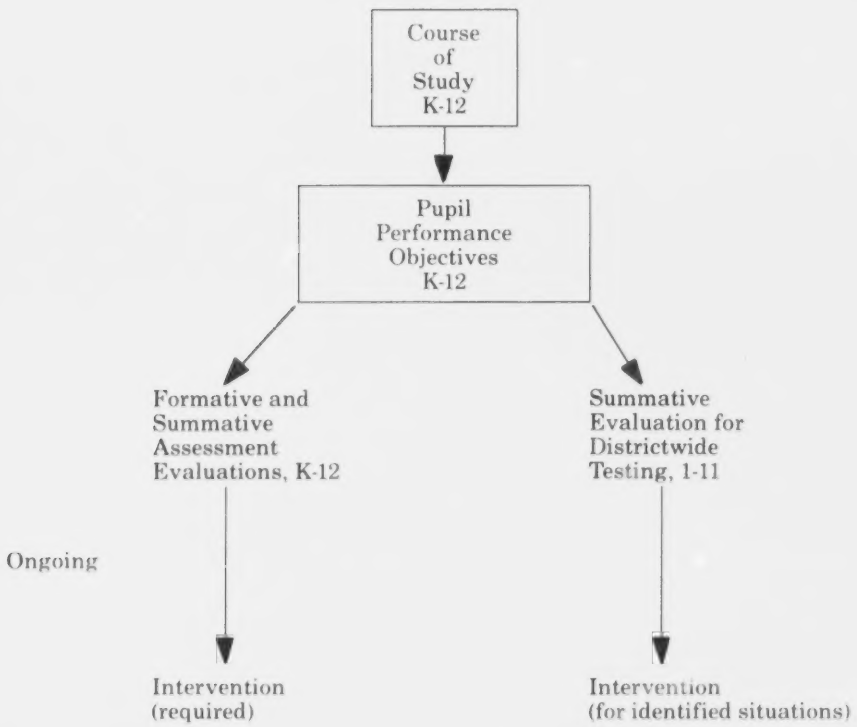
Writing taught as a process matches the competency requirements of the Minimum Standards for Elementary and Secondary Schools (1983c). The bracketed area enclosing prewriting and evaluating in Figure 1 indicates that assessment and intervention are continuous and ongoing. This area also includes the additional processes of responding, questioning, conferencing, reading orally, and using checklists. The intent of these assessment and intervention techniques is to provide direction for revision. Revision leads to better writing. All feedback students receive either from peers or teacher is based upon an assessment backed by a set of criteria derived from the course of study.

In the writing process two types of evaluation procedures, formative and summative, are implemented. Formative evaluation guides successive revisions. Summative evaluation establishes the grade and final assessment remarks. Summative evaluation comments should not be expected to be applied by developing writers to successive papers. (See pages 37-38 for a fuller description of formative and summative evaluation procedures.)

Formative and summative assessments, as they relate to the course of study and competency-based education requirements, are shown in Figure 3. Represented on the left side of Figure 3 are formative and summative evaluations used in the writing process, fulfilling the requirements for ongoing assessments and final grades. On the right side is shown summative evaluation, meeting the requirements for districtwide testing.

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

Figure 3. **Relationships Among Competency-Based Education Components**



Using formative procedures and keeping assessment notes enable teachers to recognize patterns of students' strengths and skill needs. This information is then used for formal intervention including computerized drill, peer assistance, groupings, or occasionally whole class instruction.

Students learn best when they attend to one major concern at a time in their writing; **teachers can be more effective if they help students through one writing problem at a time.** Attending to all the errors in students' papers at one time overwhelms both students and teachers.

CONFERENCING

QUESTIONING TO IMPROVE COMPOSITIONS

Questioning is a formative evaluation procedure used by teachers to train students to question their own work. Questions are individualized to students' needs. Questioning allows students to maintain a personal creative approach. Questions posed are based on the observations of strengths and weaknesses in the compositions. Teachers model questions that they expect students to begin to ask of their writings. According to Graves (1983), when students question their own work, they become better writers. Questioning based upon criteria derived from grade level objectives is an intervention strategy that meets requirements of the competency-based education program.

CONFERENCING TO IMPROVE COMPOSITIONS

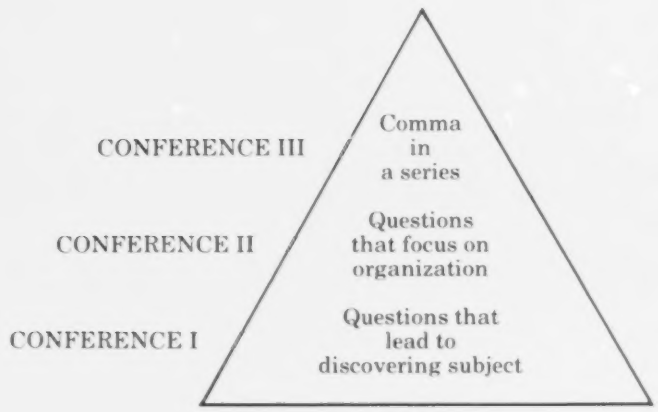
Conferencing is a formative evaluation procedure. Conferencing usually occurs on a one-to-one basis but may occur in small groups. During conferences students discuss their writing and respond to questions from teachers. Students are helped in using their oral language to clarify and enhance their writing.

Teachers put aside concern for conventions in the first conference of each assignment. The major purpose of the first feedback is to assure students that potential lies within the pieces that are started. After assuring students that the ideas are good, teachers use these first instructional conferences to help students attend to a major weakness. As teachers confer with students during revision, the conference focus shifts according to observed needs. Research shows that an initial focus on mechanics or usage can nullify students' creative flair. It is essential that teachers first validate students' ideas.

As students progress during the revision process, the conference focus will change in terms of course of study objectives. The focus will narrow from broad qualitative features such as development of ideas to quantitative features such as the conventions of writing. In early drafts conferences may focus on increasing content information. Mechanical skills may be dealt with in later drafts. Graves suggests that the changing focus of the conference may be illustrated as in Figure 4.

RESOURCES

Figure 4. **Changing Focus of the Conference**



AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE WRITING PROCESS

Information about the writing process is available in many recent books and articles. **Educators will need frequent updates on research to keep abreast of this fast-growing knowledge area.** Books most helpful in preparation of this leadership document are listed below. Readers are encouraged to read them for more in-depth information relative to the writing process.

Writing: Teachers and Children at Work—Donald Graves
Lessons from a Child—Lucy Calkins
Gnys at Wrk—Glenda Bissex
A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers—Erika Lindemann
Bay Area Writing Project booklets, available from University of California, Berkeley
Teaching Writing: Essays from the Bay Area Writing Project, Gerald Camp, ed.

Working with Youngstown State University personnel, teachers from Youngstown City Schools and Mahoning County Schools have developed a manual to help teachers improve composition instruction using various intervention techniques. Copies of *Teacher to Teacher: Composition Instruction in Youngstown City and Mahoning County Schools* (Mason, 1985, in press) may be purchased from Youngstown State University, English Department, Arts and Sciences Building, Youngstown, OH, 44555.

WRITING EXPERIENCES

CHAPTER III

WRITING EXPERIENCES

OBJECTIVES

EDUCATORS WILL HAVE A BROADENED PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENT WRITING EXPERIENCE NEEDS.

EDUCATORS WILL WRITE CLEAR, CONCISE, AND APPROPRIATE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS.

WHAT KINDS OF WRITING EXPERIENCES SHOULD STUDENTS HAVE?

CLASSIFICATIONS OF WRITING STYLES

Before discussing writing experiences, it is essential to identify the basic historical classifications of writing styles in which teachers have been trained. Each of these classifications employs different language to identify the same writing content. The first is derived from the nineteenth century categories of Bain (1866) and the application of these categories by Harvard University. These were termed

- narrative
- descriptive
- expository
- persuasive

Harvard University, using examples in literature representing these categories, established rigid essay rules that became the standard for composition instruction in America's high schools and colleges.

The focus on rigid rules requiring imitation of existing literature came into question following World War II. In 1949 the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) promoted the research of semanticists and linguists. It was determined that instruction in composition should focus more on language than on literature. Student needs in self-expression emphasized by the Dartmouth College Conference in 1966 continued the focus on language as did the work of Macrorie (1970) and Elbow (1973). The writer's "authentic voice" was to be heard.

TYPES OF WRITING

Incorporating these emphases while attending to the pragmatic needs of the growing Age of Information, Kinneavy (1980) developed a classification of writing styles based upon the orientation of text. His classifications are

- referential (subject oriented)
- expressive (writer oriented)
- persuasive (audience oriented)
- literary (language oriented)

James Britton (1975) also developed a classification of school discourse according to the purpose for which it was written. Britton's classifications are

- transactional (transmitting information)
- poetic (communicating through beauty in language)
- expressive (expressing feelings and ideas)

In the past decade, the leaders of the Bay Area Writing Project, now the National Writing Project, have been educating teachers using Kinneavy's and Britton's classifications. Colleges are teaching writing using these two classifications.

TYPES OF WRITING

Not only should one talk about the styles/modes of writing but also about the types of writing in which these modes are exercised. Types of writing vary from informal to formal and may include the following examples:

- personal note
- list
- thank you note
- business letter
- summary
- paraphrase
- advertisement
- theoretical paper
- literary analysis
- definition
- historical essay

[For a more comprehensive list of types of writing, see *Integrating Language Arts* (Ohio Department of Education, 1985b].

CLASSROOM FACTORS

WRITING FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES AND DIFFERENT AUDIENCES FROM DIFFERENT ROLES

Purposes for writing generate the need for different modes and different types. Appropriate modes, vocabulary, and organization must be used for different audiences and different purposes. Throughout a K-12 program students should be provided many opportunities to respond to different kinds of writing assignments, for different purposes, using different modes and types, and from different perspectives.

SYSTEM FOR ANALYZING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Figure 5, page 21, outlines a matrix for analyzing writing assignments. Using district courses of study, school personnel could develop a similar matrix appropriate for their school district. Types of audiences and roles would be excellent additions to this matrix. Using this or a similar matrix from which to develop prompts, curriculum developers assure that students have a wide range of writing experiences throughout the K-12 program.

CLASSROOM FACTORS THAT ENHANCE WRITING

Students learn to write in environments that are both psychologically supportive and academically demanding. In reviewing teacher behavior research, Neman (1980) notes that teachers who produce creative students

- display interest in individual students
- act in a warm encouraging manner
- avoid negative criticisms
- have expectations of student success
- insist upon quality

Neman points out some basic ways to make learning to write more agreeable:

- establish an accepting classroom atmosphere
- build warm, supportive teacher-student relationships
- employ a methodology that is personalized

ANALYZING WRITING

Figure 5. **Matrix for Analyzing Writing Assignments**

MODES: / FORM:	Referential-Subject Oriented	Expressive-Writer Oriented	Persuasive-Audience Oriented	Literary-Language Oriented
Notes				
Personal Letter				
Business Letter				
Journal/Diary				
Summary				
Précis				
Paraphrase				
Definition				
Resumé				
Literary Analysis				
Research Paper				
Poetry				
Prose				
Essay				
Ad				
Commercial				
Editorial				
Dialogue				
Story				
Autobiography				
Biography				
Application form				
One-act play				
Other				

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER IV

WRITING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE

EDUCATORS WILL UNDERSTAND WRITING DEVELOPMENT AS IT RELATES TO CHILD GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

WHAT ARE EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING PERFORMANCE AT VARIOUS AGES?

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT IN WRITING

Theorists and practitioners have been researching development of writing skills at various ages, grades, and developmental stages. Many questions remain unanswered at this time relative to performance expectations. Until more answers are found, teachers should develop new ways of looking at students' attempts to solve writing problems. What students say and do during the writing process provides insights for teachers to use in focusing on ways to help students solve writing problems.

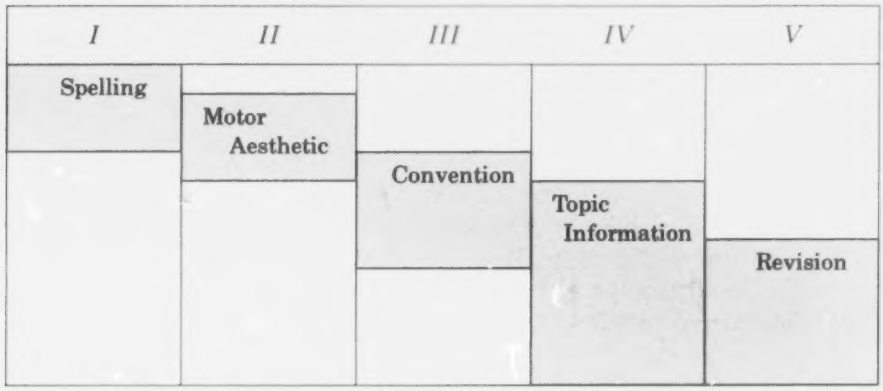
GENERAL ORDER OF SOLVING PROBLEMS

In *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*, Graves (1983) supplies insights into how students develop as writers. He notes that growth comes when opportunities are provided for students to solve problems, even as adults solve problems, by doing. He notes a general order of problems and problem solving. As illustrated in Figure 6, he identifies the following broad stages:

I. Most beginners cite spelling as the central issue.
II. Neatness and form then become the focus.
III. Conventions of writing preoccupy the third stage.
IV. At the fourth stage students attend to selecting a good topic and including enough information about it.
V. Finally, students struggle with the revision process, adding and subtracting information, seeking better organization, choosing more appropriate words, and so forth. This stage remains throughout life.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Figure 6. **Child's Consciousness of Problem Solving**



Graves' categories generally coincide with the first through fifth grade levels. Individual students may vary from this scheme. Some students may continue to struggle with factors in the early categories far into the school years, even into adulthood. Graves lists several principles and exceptions to his model.

- For some learners, spelling and handwriting issues last a lifetime. For others such imbalances may be behind them by the time they are seven years of age.
- What teachers *emphasize in class* becomes the center of child imbalance. If teachers never get beyond spelling, aesthetics, or conventions, then the child will not learn to take ownership of his own selection, the best means to solving problems in the first three tracks in [Figure 6] (I to III).
- Teachers who emphasize information *without giving help* in the first three columns prevent many children from being released from these problems for a fuller attention to information.
- From a practice standpoint, all children function in all five categories the day they start to write.
- All five categories are present in the life of any writer, six-year-old or professional. To some degree, each of the categories can grow in practice and concept over a lifetime.
- Each category raises new issues of growth for the next. This is why children cite these in this order. The ideal is for the writer to put conventions behind him in order to focus on information and his own intentions exclusively (pp. 237-238).

Reflecting upon his observations, Graves notes the following:

- Young students, being egocentric, focus their writing on themselves.
- Repetition is important for growth. Young students may write about the same topic many times.
- As students mature they are able to see writing problems in a broad perspective, entertain options, and plan for solutions; this process is called decentering.
- Decentering slows student writing growth as time is spent with reflection and experimentation.
- Many factors, such as audience, mechanics, self-concept, school environment, teacher, and physical health, influence writing variability.
- Willingness to take risks causes writing quality to vary.
- Writing quality varies from day to day.
- In an average classroom only about five or six students may be writing at their peak performance on any given day.
- Variability—the willingness to try new subjects, voices, forms of organization, and language — is a positive factor.
- Teachers can enhance variability by their openness to students' experimentation and risk taking.

Different kinds of writing styles can be handled by students at different stages of growth. By age nine, most students can

- write narrative sequences and make concrete associations
- succeed in writing tales of descriptions
- write remarkable short poems

The issue of which styles/modes of writing are appropriate for different age groups is not settled. Palumbo (1985) reported in a conversation that first grade students in Columbus City Schools were able to write good scientific reports and persuasive arguments when given learning situations and topics appropriate for their age group.

It is interesting to note that ninety percent of students entering first grade believe they know how to write. They do not attend to concerns relative to modes of discourse, spelling, or handwriting; adults create those concerns for them (Fox and Allen, 1983). Young children are aware that words have meaning and communicate a message. Teachers must provide students with many opportunities to experiment with ideas and with the qualitative characteristics of good writing regardless of age or grade level.

To deal with words beyond their spelling vocabulary, young students invent spellings closely related to phonetic sounds, transferring easily and quickly to correct orthography upon learning the correct form (Cochrane, et al., 1984). A fuller discussion about invented spellings appears in *English Language Arts Curriculum* (1985a).

RESEARCH

Writings of Piaget (1955, 1962) provide insights into the growth that moves students away from egocentrism to a sense of "otherness." Such growth has implications for writing instruction and writing performance expectations.

WRITING DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Research findings about cognitive development, writing achievement, and instruction (Nold, 1982; Daiute, 1982) include the following:

- Young children are hampered in performing a complex task like writing because basic motor skills are not routine and the ability to perform and review a task is absent.
- Ability to examine a message for faults and to take the role of audience develops late.
- Sixth graders may be aware that they should take the role of audience but cannot do so consistently.
- College students often do not meet the needs of their readers (audience).
- Display of a particular writing skill occurs sporadically depending upon degree of competence and other techniques required for the task.
- Conventions of writing can be learned early in the development of writing skills because they do not require decisions about audience, topic, or purposes.
- Writing situations are so varied and purposes so complex that writers may not be able to handle situation C even though they previously handled situations A and B.
- Ability to choose words to represent meaning (lexis) grows as students mature.
- Students can be taught how to make a sentence complete, increasing their normal syntactic growth through sentence combining.
- Older students are able to decide length, variety, and complexity of syntax, depending on their audience and purpose.
- When students encounter more demanding topics, their sentence structure and grammar suffer.
- Skilled writers have developed strategies that reduce their attention load; they know the conventions, when to plan, when to review.
- Skilled writers work longer than unskilled writers.
- Skilled writers spend significantly more time in prewriting, rereading, and revising.
- Skilled writers make more organizational and word choice changes.

RESEARCH

- Twelfth graders not identified as skilled writers lack a sophisticated strategy of revision; they correct conventions but spend little time evaluating their writing for purpose and meaning.
- Unskilled writers tend to treat writing like speech, forging ahead without conscious planning.
- Even when writers consciously decide how to fulfill their *intentions (purpose, audience, style)*, they have difficulty deciding when their writing is good enough; they need to test their writing on an audience (responders).
- Writers develop skill at *intentional* subtasks last; they are not learned in the way that conventional subtasks (usage, spelling, punctuation, capitalization) are learned.
- The effect of topic is highly variable as is the effect of type or style.
- Students who spell correctly on spelling tests may misspell the same words in first drafts.
- Revising for conventions—encouraged as a *normal* part of the writing process and not as punishment for incompetence —frees students of unreasonable expectations that their first draft will be perfect.
- It is more difficult to teach young children revision skills than older unskilled students.
- Older students can be taught to apply attention saving strategies such as reviewing.
- Drill and practice are important for the novice; however, drill and practice cannot immediately improve first drafts written by inexperienced writers.
- A prewriting strategy called heuristics can be taught to older students.
- Idea overlap within sentences has features that suggest it is caused by short-term memory limits, i.e., the error occurs more than seven words into the sentence.
- While completing a sentence, the writer monitors the initial clause but does not remember specific grammatical markers such as phrase form, number, word order, or part of speech.
- Revision strategies develop in older students when they are taught sentence combining, options in syntax, word choice, and organization as applied to their decisions about purpose, audience, and topic.
- Students learn more efficiently when the teacher is very specific about revision needs within students' writings.
- Mere quantity of corrections is uncorrelated with improvement in writing skills.
- Even young students respond with improved messages when given more explicit indications about a message's inadequacy.

RESEARCH

- Quality of instruction is reflected in improved quality of student writing.
- Clear, concise, and appropriate writing assignments assist students in improving writing skills.

More research results about composition can be found in *Integrating Language Arts* (1985b).

DEVELOPING PROMPTS

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPING PROMPTS FOR WRITING EXPERIENCES

OBJECTIVE

EDUCATORS WILL DEVELOP PROMPTS FOR STUDENTS' WRITING EXPERIENCES.

WHAT KINDS OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS PROMOTE WRITING DEVELOPMENT?

DEFINITION OF A PROMPT

Prompts are writing assignments which stimulate students to write. Prompts can be story starters, topics, story endings, pictures, a poem, a set of directions, a child's storybook, sentence starters, oral discussion about a controversial topic followed with an opinion writing session, and many other things. The list is almost endless. Generating thoughts about a specific idea, concept, or topic prior to writing serves to increase the student's capacity to write.

Some sample prompts are given below:

Story starter: Mac had always wondered where the creek originated. No mountains were in view so the water was not from melting snow. The water was always crystal clear but no fish lived in it until his father built a dam. Below the dam beautiful rainbow trout flourished; above the dam no fish were present. Where did the water come from and why would no fish live in it until oxygen had been added? Mac decided he would find the source of this strange water. He began to move upstream. About a mile from his house he...

Topic: My favorite Pet

Story endings:...and that is why Sally came home with scratches on her arms, blue fingertips, blue lips, and a blue tongue.

Poem: (any appropriate poem that will elicit writing about a topic)

Sentence starters: Being a butterfly is like...

PROMPTS

PROMPTS FOR CLASSROOM USE VERSUS DISTRICTWIDE TESTING

Differences between writing assignments for districtwide testing and teaching purposes are very real. Some topics appropriate for class work may never appear in districtwide testing situations and vice versa. In *Teaching and Assessing Writing* (1985), White shares his experiences and findings about writing topics from large-scale testing programs. Developers of districtwide tests using writing samples can profit from White's two decades of constructing valid prompts that facilitate student writing. He summarizes the following:

- Consider the design of the writing topic from the viewpoint of the student confronted with a forty-five minute impromptu test of writing skills.
- Writing to a set topic requires
  - — comprehending the prompt
  - — understanding the style of writing expected
  - — conceiving and organizing a response
  - — fitting the response into the allotted time span
  - — tailoring the response to the identified audience
  - — needing to edit the work
- Writing anxiety interferes with understanding the assignment.
- Not knowing the grading criteria produces writing anxiety.
- Choice of topic for districtwide testing is critical.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD PROMPTS

Whether the prompts are for districtwide testing or teaching purposes, care should be taken to select prompts that are motivating and developmentally appropriate for students who will be writing to them. A list of characteristics to help educators select good prompts follows. A good prompt

- makes it easy for students to generate ideas
- contains no racial, sexual, religious, age, or social bias
- has simple vocabulary and easily understood language (clarity)
- requires no research (for districtwide testing only)
- permits writer to respond in a variety of modes
- elicits enough writing to be evaluated
- reflects students' skills
- appeals to students
- causes students to think before beginning to write
- directs students to a specific audience
- is unambiguous
- is nonthreatening

- requires students to go beyond generalities
- can be completed in allotted time frame (one or two periods)
- allows for honest response
- contains directions that lead, not mislead (adapted from Palumbo, 1984)

For districtwide testing another criterion to consider is

> Will this topic be of sufficient *interest* for district evaluators to stay on task easily?

White (1985) identifies two other criteria for selecting good writing topics.

- *Prompts should have validity*, i.e., good students receive high scores; poor students receive low scores. Scores will have a good range without too much concentration in the middle.
- *Prompts should have reliability*. Pretest scoring shows considerable agreement among readers, and a scoring guide can be developed easily for describing differences among scores.

To elicit the best writing from the greatest number of students, care should be taken to determine that the focus of the prompt is narrow and specific. Multifocused prompts often evoke responses so unalike that it is difficult to establish common criteria. The following are very general, multifocused prompts:

> Write a letter to someone important about a problem in this country.
>
> Write about last summer's vacation.

Narrow or focused prompts specifically define variables that give direction to student writing. These variables include

- identity of the writer (self or a role to play)
- the audience (who the writer is writing to)
- the subject matter (what the writer should communicate to the audience)

An example of a narrow-focused prompt follows:

> Write a letter to your principal suggesting ways to improve the food quality in the lunchroom.

EVALUATING PROMPTS

PROCEDURES TO EVALUATE PROMPTS

Enough research has been conducted to give clues about prompt development. One theory states that prompts should include these elements:

- topic
- audience addressed
- purpose for the writing
- role from which the student is to write

There is indication that this theory may not be applicable to all styles of writing. Brossell (1983) tried three levels of focus and development. His three levels of prompts follow:

Level 1: Violence in the schools

Level 2: According to recent reports in the news media, there has been a marked increase in incidents of violence in public schools. Why, in your view, does such violence occur?

Level 3: You are a member of a local school council made up of teachers and citizens. A recent increase in incidents of violence in the schools has gotten widespread coverage in the local news media. As a teacher, you are aware of the problem, though you have not been personally involved in an incident. At its next meeting, the council elects to take some action. It asks each member to draft a statement setting forth his or her views on why such violence occurs. The statements will be published in the local newspaper. Write that statement expressing your own personal views on the causes of violence in the schools.

According to Brossell's study, scores from prompt Levels 1 and 2 were higher than for Level 3. In addition essay length was greater. Level 2 type of prompt received best overall results, but there were no significant differences for any level.

Until more evidence is accumulated relative to specificity in prompts, school district personnel should use the following suggestions in establishing prompts for their districtwide testing and classroom assignments:

- Generate a list of possible prompts using a panel of experienced teachers.
- Establish criteria for selecting prompts. The criteria listed under characteristics of good prompts may be helpful. (See pages 29-30).
- Pilot test different forms (levels) of the same prompt to determine what level(s) elicit(s) the best writing from students.

EVALUATING PROMPTS

The questionnaire in Figure 7 has been used by Columbus City School District personnel to identify successful prompts. This questionnaire may be used by district personnel, or they may wish to develop their own.

Figure 7. **Questionnaire for Evaluating Prompts for Validation Testing**

Name of Prompt _____

Date prompt was written or date of last revision _____

School _____

Teacher _____

Most frequent method of development (narration, description, exposition, or a combination. Please specify the combination. _____

_____

PLEASE RESPOND (Yes or No) TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS AND EXPLAIN YOUR RESPONSE.

YES NO

____ ____ 1. Did most of your students produce a writing sample?
Please explain your response. _____

_____

_____

____ ____ 2. Did the prompt elicit a measurable sample of student writing?
Please explain your response. _____

_____

_____

EVALUATING PROMPTS

PLEASE RESPOND (Yes or No) TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS AND EXPLAIN YOUR RESPONSE.

YES NO

____ ____ 3. Do you feel most (name of school district) students have the experience or knowledge necessary to respond to the prompt?
Please explain your response. _____

_____

_____

____ ____ 4. Is the prompt likely to be of interest to most students?
Please explain your response. _____

_____

_____

____ ____ 5. Will the prompt elicit an honest response from most students?
Please explain your response. _____

_____

_____

____ ____ 6. Is the prompt clear and not ambiguous in wording?
Please explain your response. _____

_____

_____

7. Is the prompt free of bias?

____ ____ Age bias
____ ____ Sexual bias
____ ____ Racial bias
____ ____ Social/cultural bias
____ ____ Religious bias

Please explain your response. _____

_____

_____

EVALUATING PROMPTS

____ ____ 8. Does the prompt suggest a logic or sequence which is appropriate?
Please explain your response. _____

_____

_____

____ ____ 9. Do you have any additional comments or concerns with the prompt?
Please explain your response. _____

_____

_____

____ ____ 10. Do you have any suggestions for revision of the script or testing procedures?

Following is a prompt that has been tested and successfully used in Ohio:

List of collections: Baseball cards, plates, coins, ribbons

Directions: People create interesting collections of many kinds. Write an essay describing the collection and explain why it is important to the collector. The collection may be your own or another's. It may be something in the list above or something different. You may begin with these two sentences (the blanks filled in):

One reason people collect things is _____.
Take for example _____.

NOTE: Your reader will consider content, form, and language in your essay. Be sure to allow time to plan and proofread.

The above prompt was adapted from *Sentence Combining: A Composing Book* (Strong, 1973). It was used successfully in the Youngstown City Schools and Mahoning County area by Youngstown State University during implementation of their ARETE' (Assessment and Revitalization Efforts for the Teaching of English) program, 1983-85 (Murphy, 1983).

To answer students' questions during the districtwide testing, teachers must develop answering techniques that do not provide advantages to one student group over another group or that lead students away from the purpose of the prompt. It is critical for reliability and validity of the testing situation that teachers keep to the *exact directions* of the prompt without adding their interpretations.

EVALUATING COMPOSITIONS

CHAPTER VI

EVALUATING COMPOSITIONS

OBJECTIVE

EDUCATORS WILL ESTABLISH CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING WRITTEN COMPOSITIONS.

WHAT METHODS ARE AVAILABLE FOR EVALUATING COMPOSITIONS?

In early attempts to find ways to assess compositions, researchers developed procedures that attended to specific counts. These evaluation procedures considered number of errors, length of sentences, numbers of units of thought, and so forth. These procedures were mostly for research projects and served little purpose for classroom teachers. More recently, researchers and classroom teachers have begun to develop evaluation procedures that assess qualitative features of composition.

QUANTITATIVE VERSUS QUALITATIVE FEATURES OF GOOD WRITING

Qualitative features cannot be counted. **They identify the important differences between good pieces of writing and poor pieces of writing.** For instance, it is possible to have a composition that is perfect in terms of the quantitative features but clearly poor in terms of qualitative features. Qualitative features include, but are not limited to, the following identified characteristics:

- creative, original ideas
- clarity
- logical argument
- coherent; well-organized; follows a planned pattern
- unity; deals with only one topic; all statements are related to the topic
- clear purpose
- appropriate word choice for topic and audience
- style maintained
- sentence variety

The focus of composition evaluation has changed in the last decade. Change has been made in what features are attended to in the compositions: quantitative versus qualitative. Differences between quantitative and qualitative evaluations are important differences for instructional focus.

EVALUATING COMPOSITIONS

Teachers are admonished no longer to make counts or test writing ability through easily quantifiable short-answer, multiple-choice questions. Teachers are now being admonished to attend first to the ideas developed in the writing and to look at the conventions of writing later. This new emphasis necessitates increased student writing which in turn means more papers to evaluate; however, grading compositions need not be a time-consuming function. New formative and summative techniques for evaluating students' writings have been developed. These techniques help teachers evaluate students' papers reliably, efficiently, and effectively in shorter time periods. They also meet competency-based education requirements.

FORMATIVE EVALUATION PROCEDURES FOR CLASSROOM USE

Ongoing, formative assessment techniques that attend to the *qualitative* features of compositions include, but are not limited to

- rating scale
- checklist
- self-appraisal
- critique of other students' work (oral or written)
- discussion work in small groups
- questioning techniques used with peers
- observation of students
- interview
- conference
- anecdotal record
- questionnaire
- inventory
- analysis of student writing folders
- evaluation scale, such as feature analysis, dichotomous, primary trait, analytic, diagnostic

ESSAY SCALES

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION PROCEDURES FOR DISTRICTWIDE TESTING AND CLASSROOM USE

Decisions relative to using a writing sample for districtwide testing include

- type of writing required
- rhetorical mode/style or modes to be examined
- quality of writing to be expected
- possible writing topics
- pretest results
- procedures for scoring papers

Summative techniques appropriate for districtwide testing using a writing sample include

- essay (general impression marking)
- primary trait
- analytic
- diagnostic

MAJOR EVALUATION SCALES

ESSAY SCALES

The *essay scale* (sometimes called "holistic") includes a set of written descriptors and representative essays of quality levels arranged from lowest to highest. A process to develop an essay scale follows:

- Students at selected grade levels write to a prompt.
- Writings are sent to a central location for reading.
- Group leader determines number of quality levels, usually ranging from four to eight.
- Papers are distributed randomly to readers who decide without prior discussion which papers go into which categories, lowest to highest.
- Upon completing the readings, each reader contributes to the group discussion that identifies the characteristics of papers selected for each quality level, while the group leader records characteristics of each level of writing.
- Readers select from among their quality levels a paper most representative of each quality level.
- Readers then select the most representative paper for each quality level.
- Group leader refines identified descriptors and marks the paper representing each descriptor.
- A score value is assigned to the combination of descriptor and representative model.

ESSAY SCALES

Each student's writing is judged and assigned the numerical score of the combination it most closely matches. This method requires readers to judge each writing as a coherent whole, assessing its quality with a focus on broad aspects of performance.

- No trait is directly or individually assessed.
- No marks are made on papers. Scores are placed on a score sheet.
- The objective is to score quickly, relying upon first impressions rather than extensive deliberation.
- Average papers (known as "range finders" or "anchor papers") serve as guides during the evaluation process.
- A descriptive scale serves to keep readers on target. See Figure 10 for a sample.
- Practice exercises at the beginning of and during the evaluating process help keep readers on target.
- Scale range may vary according to standards set in the district. They could be 4-, 5-, 6-, or 8-point scales.
- A zero category for papers may be desirable. This category does not indicate quality. A zero score is assigned to papers that are (1) blank, (2) totally illegible, (3) written in a language other than English, or (4) addressed to a completely different prompt than that assigned.

An essay scale is illustrated in Figure 8.

ESSAY SCALES

Figure 8. **Essay Scale Developed at Hudson Local Schools Summit County**

Grade 5

Level 1
- lacks ideas
- has limited attempts at writing
- uses incomplete sentences
- uses poor mechanics/spelling
- has no sense of closing statement
- lacks sentence sense

Level 2
- has one idea that is repeated throughout
- has no flow (lacks fluency)
- has little or no paragraphing
- does not continue to speak to the topic
- provides irrelevant detail
- has no sense of closing statement
- has limited mechanics/spelling skills
- uses simple sentences
- uses run-on sentences
- uses same subject for sentences over and over

Level 3
- is fluent with minor problems
- makes a genuine effort at paragraphing but not always succeeding
- has a developed, expected vocabulary
- uses relatively good conventions of writing
- makes an attempt at a closing

Level 4
- uses good sentence structure
- has original topics
- uses original/unique vocabulary
- has good flow from sentence to sentence
- has good topic sentence followed by supporting statements
- has original ideas
- uses adjectives and adverbs well
- uses sentence variety
- has a closing thought

PRIMARY TRAIT SCALES

PRIMARY TRAIT SCALES

Primary trait scoring is similar to essay scoring with one trait sharpened, narrowed, and defined in the scale. This trait is the one most important to a specific writing audience. For example, the most important trait for writing a set of instructions for assembling a bicycle would be *clarity*, i.e., a logical and unambiguous progression of directions clearly understood by the reader. Campaign literature is to persuade the voter; *persuasiveness* is the most important trait in this type of writing. Scoring guides are developed for each trait tested; therefore, a number of primary trait scales must be developed. The important value of primary trait scoring is that it can be used as the basis for decision making relative to intervention.

A primary trait scoring guide according to Lloyd-Jones (1977) consists of

- the exercise itself
- a statement of the primary trait of the writing elicited by the exercise
- an interpretation of the exercise indicating how the prompt is presumed to affect the writer
- an interpretation of how the exercise is related to the primary trait
- a system for defining the shorthand which is to be used in reporting descriptions of the writing (the actual scoring guide)
- samples of papers that have been scored (definition of the score points)
- discussions of why each sample paper was scored as it was (extension of the definitions) [Cooper and Odell, 1977, p. 45]

The plan for developing primary trait scales includes

- setting a specific *purpose* for writing
- identifying a *task* that will measure ability to write for that purpose
- identifying the *primary trait* of a successful response to the task
- developing a rationale describing how the prompt relates to the purpose and the primary trait
- outlining four (or more) levels of success on the trait with a scoring guide

TRAIT SCALES

EXAMPLE:

Purpose: persuasion for personal/social reasons
Task: to convince landlord to let you keep your puppy
Primary trait: making appropriate appeals
Secondary traits: (may also be identified)

The primary trait scale (Mullis, 1980) developed for the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) writing test in 1979 is shown in Figure 9. This primary trait scale was developed for a prompt that was a picture of children on a boat.

Figure 9. **Primary Trait Scale Used by National Assessment for Educational Progress**

Directions: "Children on a Boat" (To be read by teacher with students following the reading)

PROMPT

Look carefully at the picture.

These kids are having fun jumping on the overturned boat. Imagine you are one of the children in the picture. Or if you wish, imagine that you are someone standing nearby watching the children. Tell what is going on as he or she would tell it. Write as if you were telling this to a good friend, in a way that expresses strong feeling. Help your friend FEEL the experience too.

NAEP Trait Scoring Guide for "Children on a Boat"

Rhetorical Mode: Expressive

Primary Trait: Elaborated expression of a point of view through entry into an imaginative situation.

Rationale of Primary Trait: The writer is asked to find a role and to reveal an attitude by projection into a situation. There are three verbs of crucial instruction, "tell," "write," and "help." "Tell" encourages role playing and a strong "I" voice. "Write" specifies the audience "a good friend," thereby suggesting a tone and maybe encouraging dialogue. "Help your friend feel" makes additional reference to the audience and necessitates establishing a unified mood by carefully selecting, inventing, and ordering details.

General Scoring Rationale: In better papers the details are not explained separately but are selected and invented for their appropriateness and consistency. These details are used to present a structured explanation of what is going on in the picture. In the best papers, details are selected and invented to extend the perspective of the writer. The narrative is amplified to convey a unified attitude.

TRAIT SCALES

Scoring Guide Categories:

0 = No response.

1 = *No entry into the imaginary world of the picture.* Respondents write about children, the boat or about anything else to do with the picture. However, there is only a single statement or the information is too disjointed to make a point. Some papers present random details, bits of information or lists of observations that do not create a situation. Papers that are purely descriptive, only reporting what's in the photograph or picture, also should be included in this category.

2 = *Entry into the imaginary world of the picture.* Respondents have accepted the world of the picture. However, control and consistency necessary to create a structured presentation are lacking. Often there is no structure to the world of the picture. This is evidenced by few internal transitions and details that do not harmonize. The ideas may be related, but they do not make a whole. Lack of consistency and transitions results in little logical progression of ideas. On the other hand, these papers may have structure, but the narrative is not worked out. There is little imagination on the part of the writer to create the story. An attitude may be stated, but it's not illustrated. You do not "feel" a mood has been created. Other papers may have some structure and the outline of story or the hint of a mood, yet neither is developed. Generally "2" papers are either undeveloped or developed in a helter-skelter or confusing manner.

3 = *Good entry into the imaginary world of the picture.* Papers are generally competent. Respondents evidence control and consistency to create a structured presentation. Often there are strong topic sentences and good transitions. However, the good quality of the papers is marred by development that is skeletal or somewhat uneven. Narratives display imagination, but often are left with gaps or other unevenness. Details may be inadequate, excessive, or unclear. Attitudes may be stated and somewhat supported, but not necessarily presented to "help your friend feel." A definite mood is not created. The underdeveloped paper has a definite beginning and end, yet there is not enough material to fill out the structure or it is contrived. The unevenly developed papers either have excessive details or the structure is oddly filled out.

TRAIT SCALES

4 = *Emotive and consistent entry into the imaginary world of the picture.* Loose ends have been tied up or cut off (although a strong paper without closure can be rated in this category). Papers are consistent. Narratives are well done and evenly developed or attitudes are expressed so a definite mood is created. You do "feel" the experience. The structure is unified and supported by imaginative and evocative details.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 = I don't know.

Secondary Trait Categories:

Use of Dialogue:

1 = Direct quote from one person in the story. The one person may talk more than once. When in doubt whether two statements are made by the same person or different people, code 1. A direct quote of a thought also counts. The quote can be in the hypothetical tense.

2 = Direct quote from two or more persons in the story.

Point of view:

1 = Point of view is consistently one of the five children. Include "If I were one of the children..." and recalling participation as one of the children.

2 = Point of view is consistently one of an observer. When an observer joins the children in play, the point of view is still "2" because the observer makes a sixth person playing. Include papers with minimal evidence, even when it is difficult to tell which point of view is being taken.

3 = Point of view cannot be determined, or does not control point of view.

Tense:

1 = Present Tense—Past tense may also be present if not part of the "main line" of the story.

2 = Past Tense—if a past tense description is acceptably brought up to present, code as "past." Sometimes the present is used to create a frame for past events. Code this as past, since the actual description is in the past.

TRAIT SCALES

3 = Hypothetical time papers are written entirely from the "If I were on the boat" or "If I were there, I would" tense. These papers often include future references such as "When I get on the boat, I will." If part is hypothetical and the rest past or present and tense is controlled, code present or past. If the introduction, up to two sentences, is only part in past or present, then code hypothetical.

4 = Cannot determine time, or does not control tense. One wrong tense generally places the paper in this category.

Fantasy: Story tries to reproduce the fantasy games of children, such as pretending to be pirates, shipwrecked or riding whales. Stating the fantasy is not enough; two or more unelaborated fantasy situations, or a fantasy situation with at least one elaboration must be present. Descriptions of games, for example, follow the leader or king of the hill, are not included. Fantasy is more than a literal and logical explanation of the picture.

1 = Fantasy is present.

2 = Fantasy is not present.

Insights: Story develops insights into the writer's perspective on his life or life in general. The message should be integral to the story—not tacked-on sentiment. The generalizations or social commentaries can be stated implicitly as well as explicitly. Themes are often based on positive or negative value statements about childhood or adulthood. Reminiscence (I remember when...) is not enough; some meaningful or intelligent statement must be implied.

1 = Insights are present.

2 = Insights are not present.

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ANALYTIC SCALES

ANALYTIC SCALES

Analytic scale scoring is a trait-by-trait analysis of a paper's merit. The number of identified traits varies with the assignment. Analytic scale scores may vary from 1-4 to 1-8 for each identified trait. The important value of analytic scoring is that results of readings can be used as the basis for decision making on the development of intervention strategies.

Analytic scales are more general than primary trait scales or diagnostic scales; they cover *all characteristics* of quality writing. For instruction and intervention purposes, educators must continually remind themselves that the parts of the composition do not equal the whole. Although the analytic scale weighs each quality separately, care must be taken to assure that the vast majority of instruction and intervention is provided within compositions, not fragmented or separated from the context of composing.

Diederich (1974) identified five significant traits for his analytic scale

- ideas
- organization
- wording
- flavor
- mechanics

Procedures for analytic scoring of papers must be established.

- Each paper is read through once by at least two readers for each trait to be scored.
- Readers must not let scores in one area (e.g., mechanics) influence scoring of other traits (e.g., organization).
- Scores of general merit (i.e., ideas, organization, and so forth) can be weighted.

It has been found that applying analytic scoring *with controlled conditions* has achieved a high reliability level. An additional advantage of this methodology is that the information provided can be used for developing intervention strategies. Traits on the scale identify important characteristics of qualitative writing. Each of these traits can be identified on scan sheets for computer use. Computers can be programmed to provide important feedback to teacher, student, and parents relative to a student's performance in each trait on the scale.

Figure 10 illustrates the analytic scale for tenth grade as developed and validated (content validity) with established interrater reliability by Columbus Public Schools (Palumbo, 1984).

ANALYTIC SCALES

Figure 10. **Analytic Scale Used by Columbus Public Schools**

Grade 10

GENERAL FEATURES/CONTENT		GENERAL FEATURES/STYLE		
IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	INTENT	WORD CHOICE	SENTENCE STRUCTURE
8 • creative and original • has controlling central idea • no necessary points are overlooked 7 • adequate support for central idea	• follows organized plan • natural flow • effective use of transitional devices • uses relevant detail	• accurate and specific in direction/purpose • considers audience • maintains appropriate tone • sincere and honest; informed	• appropriate word choice • uses fresh words and phrases • specific and precise • avoids cliches and/or slang expressions	• all sentences make sense • varied sentence length and pattern • an occasional fragment or run-on sentence in complicated sentence structure
6 • some creative insight • has controlling central idea • includes most necessary points 5 • adequately developed	• may occasionally stray from plan or sequence • generally moves smoothly • some transitional devices • generally uses relevant detail	• generally accurate and specific in direction/purpose • generally aware of audience • generally sincere and honest	• generally appropriate word choice • some evidence of fresh words and phrases	• sentences are generally clear • attempts sentence variety • some fragments or run-ons in a complicated sentence structure
4 • not creative or original • weak controlling idea • includes some necessary points 3 • insufficiently developed	• may abandon plan or sequence • does not move smoothly • frequently uses irrelevant detail • may have inappropriate conclusion	• limited sense of audience and direction/purpose • tone may suggest lack of involvement	• limited vocabulary • ordinary or imprecise word choice	• some sentences are unclear • limited sentence variety • occasional fragments and/or run-on even in simple sentences
2 • superficial and unimaginative • lacks controlling idea • omits necessary points 1 • poorly developed	• no plan, sequence or sense of organization • lacks sense of movement • most details are irrelevant	• flat, colorless, lifeless • no sense of audience or direction/purpose • may lack honesty	• limited vocabulary • incorrect or inappropriate word choice	• many unclear sentences • no sentence variety • frequent fragments or run-ons

ANALYTIC SCALES

Figure 10. **Analytic Scale Used by Columbus Public Schools**

Grade 10

	MECHANICS				
	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	CAPITALIZATION	SPELLING	NEATNESS/ LEGIBILITY
8	• few errors in verb choice, sense, agreement, pronoun reference and/or other grammatical conventions (Writes in written, edited American English)	• few or no errors in punctuation	• few or no errors in capitalization	• consistently correct spelling with few exceptions	• neat and legible • consistent margins and indentations
6	• generally controls verb choice, tense, agreement, pronoun reference and/or other grammatical conventions	• generally punctuates correctly	• generally capitalizes correctly	• generally spells words correctly	• generally neat and legible • generally consistent margins and indentations
4	• frequent errors in verb choice, tense, agreement, pronoun reference and/or other grammatical conventions	• frequent errors in punctuation	• frequent errors in capitalization	• frequent errors • spelling may be inconsistent	• difficult to read • inconsistent margins and indentatins
2	• many serious usage errors which interfere with meaning or flow	• many errors in punctuation interfere with meaning	• many errors in capitalization	• many spelling errors even of frequently used words	• barely legible • no margins or indentations • sloppy

DIAGNOSTIC SCALES

DIAGNOSTIC SCALES

A *diagnostic scale* contains a series of statements relative to the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of writing. These skill statements identify the writer's strengths. Each skill statement is accompanied by several identified needs for intervention in cases where the skill is not present. Figure 11 illustrates a diagnostic scale used at Bowling Green State University.

Figure 11. **Diagnostic Scale Used at Bowling Green State University**

Rubric

1. AUDIENCE: This essay clearly demonstrated an awareness of its intended reader.

   Problems:
   - ___strategy toward audience
   - ___credibility
     - ___information
     - ___argument
   - ___other
   - ___tone
   - ___point of view
     - ___verb tense
     - ___pronoun shift

2. ORGANIZATION/THEME STRUCTURE: This essay has a clear structure appropriate to its thesis and subject.

   Problems:
   - ___thesis
     - ___clarity
     - ___focus
   - logical pattern structure
     - ___introduction
     - ___ideas related to thesis
     - ___conclusions
   - ___other
   - ___coherence
     - ___essay
     - ___paragraph
   - ___transitions
     - ___between paragraphs
     - ___within paragraphs
   - ___paragraphing

3. DEVELOPMENT: The various phases of the essay are fully developed.

   Problems:
   - ___introduction
   - ___main ideas
     - ___explanation
     - ___illustration/support
   - ___conclusion
   - ___conciseness (unnecessary repetition)
   - ___other

DIAGNOSTIC SCALES

4. SENTENCE STRUCTURE: The sentences of this essay are generally free of errors and appropriately varied.

Problems:

___non-English structures
___inappropriate fragments
___run-ons (fused)
___comma splices
___variety/style
  ___length
  ___constructions
___unclear sentences
___awkward construction
  ___parallel structure
  ___dangling/misplaced modifiers
  ___inflated words
  ___ineffective passive
  ___mixed constructions
___other

5. WORD CHOICE: The words in this essay are chosen with accuracy and with attention to style.

Problems:

___vague/unclear words
___cliches
___content words
___function words
___other
___idiomatic expressions
___unclear references
___wordiness
___repetition

6. GRAMMAR/USAGE/MECHANICS: This essay demonstrated a sound control of conventional usage and mechanics.

Problems:

___errors in grammar/usage
  ___verb/auxiliary forms
  ___noun/plural and possessive
  ___pronoun forms
  ___adjective forms
  ___adverb forms
  ___a/an/the
  ___subject/verb agreement
  ___pronoun antecedent agreement
  ___singular/plural consistency
  ___other

errors in mechanics
  ___end punctuation
  ___commas
  ___semicolons
  ___colons
  ___contractions
  ___apostrophes
  ___hyphens
  ___quotation marks
  ___dashes
  ___capitalization
  ___italics
  ___abbreviations
  ___numbers
  ___other

___errors in spelling/homonyms
___accidental word omission/repetition
___errors in manuscript form
  ___footnotes
  ___bibliography
  ___other
  ___indentation
  ___documentation

Name_____ Section_____

CHECKLISTS

Decisions relative to evaluation scales have implications for curriculum and instruction. Although districtwide testing may have identified student weaknesses in segregated skills, teachers should continue to work toward the quality of whole compositions. Focusing instruction on parts of compositions identified as categories on the scales is not advised. Intervention resulting from both districtwide testing and classroom assessments must reflect the process approach to writing.

Checkoff systems for identifying skills mastered are not appropriate for writing skills. Mastering a skill category or its subcomponents on a scale does not mean a student will need no further instruction in this skill. Errors apparently mastered at one time will reappear as more demanding topics are encountered.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Not all composition evaluations occur at districtwide testing time; they also occur in the classroom. During the writing process several evaluation procedures are employed for identifying intervention needs. Examples of such classroom evaluative procedures are described below.

CHECKLISTS

Checklists contain questions or statements relative to qualitative and quantitative characteristics of good writing. Papers are read to determine if each characteristic is present. Figure 12 illustrates one type of self-evaluation checklist.

CHECKLISTS

Figure 12. **Self-Evaluation Checklist**

NAME _____

DID I

Follow a plan?									
Use important details to show what is happening?									
Use a beginning to catch the readers' attention?									
Describe the character?									
Make the character talk like real people?									
Match the setting to the story?									
Describe the setting?									
Use a strong ending?									
Begin each sentence with a capital letter?									
Place quotation marks around the exact words of the character speaking?									
Begin a new paragraph for each new idea?									
End each sentence with proper punctuation?									
Spell all words correctly?									

DICHOTOMOUS SCALES

DICHOTOMOUS SCALES

A *dichotomous scale* contains a series of statements about the qualities of writing. Questions are answered yes or no. The reader decides if the writing sample has the quality identified in the statement. An adaptation of a scale developed by a group of teachers participating in a study (Cooper and Odell, 1977) is illustrated in Figure 13.

Figure 13. **Sample Dichotomous Scale**

Score Sheet

	Yes	No		
Content I.	____	____	1.	Ideas themselves are insightful.
	____	____	2.	Ideas are creative or original.
	____	____	3.	Ideas are rational or logical.
	____	____	4.	Ideas are expressed with clarity.
Organization II.	____	____	5.	There is a thesis.
	____	____	6.	Order of thesis idea is followed throughout the essay.
	____	____	7.	Thesis is adequately developed.
	____	____	8.	Every paragraph is relevant to the thesis.
	____	____	9.	Each paragraph has a controlling idea.
	____	____	10.	Each paragraph is developed with relevant and concrete details.
	____	____	11.	The details that are included are well ordered.
Mechanics III.	____	____	12.	There are few misspellings.
	____	____	13.	There are few capitalization errors.
	____	____	14.	Punctuation errors are limited.
	____	____	15.	There are few errors in the use of verbs.
	____	____	16.	There are few errors in the use of pronouns.

FEATURE ANALYSIS SCALES

____ ____ 17. There are few errors in the use of modifiers.
____ ____ 18. There are few distracting errors in word usage.
____ ____ 19. The sentences are written with clarity.

FEATURE ANALYSIS SCALES

A *feature analysis scale* assesses the development of a specific skill, for example, sentence development. This type of scale assists students and teachers in attending to one feature of the composition, as illustrated in Figure 14.

Figure 14. **Feature Analysis Scale: Sentences**

1. Are there *ONLY* complete sentences (no fragments)? ____
2. Are all sentences interesting to read? ____
3. Are there *NO* run-ons? ____
4. Are there correct simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences? ____
5. Do all the sentences stick to the main ideas *WITHOUT* repeating the same idea over and over? ____
6. Can you understand each sentence and does each sentence flow easily? ____
7. Is every sentence necessary to the paragraph? ____
8. Are multilevel sentences present? ____

OTHER SCALES

OTHER SCALES

Other types of formative evaluations include peer evaluator scales and revision comment sheets as shown in Figures 15 and 16.

Figure 15. **Peer Evaluator Rating Scale**

ANALYTIC SCALE FOR DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

Writer:
Peer Evaluator:

	Low High	Peer Rating	Instructor Rating
Organization	2 4 6 8 10	_____	_____
Unity of Impression	2 4 6 8 10	_____	_____
Style	2 4 6 8 10	_____	_____
Syntax and Grammar	2 4 6 8 10	_____	_____
Usage	2 4 6 8 10	_____	_____
Spelling and Punctuation	2 4 6 8 10	_____	_____
		Total:	Total:

Scoring Guidelines

Organization:

High—Essay has an introduction, middle, and conclusion; clear transitions; paragraphs adequately developed with descriptive detail; writer follows a route allowing for orderly progress from one detail to another; spatial relationships clear to the reader.

Low—Essay lacks either an introduction, middle, or conclusion; weak transitions; insufficient development of paragraphs with descriptive detail; no orderly progression from one detail to another; spatial relationship confusing.

Unity of Impression:

High—Details of subject and descriptive modifiers selected to convey a dominant impression; point of view consistent.

Low—Details randomly selected; writer conveys no clear or consistent impression of the subject; shifting point of view.

OTHER SCALES

Style:

High—Interesting, imaginative use of language; concrete nouns, vivid adjectives, strong active verbs; occasional metaphor, simile, or allusion; tone and diction suitable to purpose and audience.

Low—Language is trite, colorless; excessive abstractions and verbs in passive voice; no figurative language; tone and diction inconsistent or unsuitable to purpose and audience.

Syntax and Grammar

High—Sentences convey meaning clearly, grammatically; no fragments or run-on sentences; sentences varied in structure and length.

Low—Sentences awkward, repetitious, unvaried in structure or length; numerous grammatical errors, including run-on sentences and fragments.

Usage:

High—Writer uses idioms properly and observes standard usage.

Low—Language is unidiomatic; numerous errors in usage.

Spelling and Punctuation:

High—Free of errors.

Low—Numerous errors. (Lynch, 1982)

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OTHER SCALES

Figure 16. **Revision Comments Sheets**

Writer _____

Notes from Response Group:

What did you like best in the writing? _____

_____

_____

What is the purpose of the writing? _____

_____

_____

What did you learn from the writing? _____

_____

_____

What could I add to make the writing better? _____

_____

_____

What would you like to know more about? _____

_____

_____

What parts are not clear? _____

_____

_____

How could I organize the material better? _____

_____

_____

OTHER SCALES

Figure 16. **Revision Comments Sheet (Cont)**

Is the beginning good? _____

_____

_____

Is the ending good? _____

_____

_____

Writer's comments _____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher's comments _____

_____

_____

_____

LIMITATIONS OF ESSAY EVALUATIONS

All evaluation procedures have limitations. They can, therefore, be misused or abused. Essay scoring is a means only of rank ordering papers according to the district's established criteria. It is best used for program evaluation; it does not contain diagnostic information. It does not identify intervention needs of students.

Scores from essays are misused when interpreted to mean an absolute value; an essay score does *not* represent an absolute value. Test results yield only *approximations* of ability levels. Prompts vary from year to year in characteristics that identify them as being harder or easier. In addition, groups of students vary in abilities. White (1985) notes, "No two essay questions make exactly the same demands on students; no two groups of students have exactly the same range of writing abilities" (p. 29). School personnel must make a decision about acceptable levels of competence *each time* a districtwide test is given.

Primary trait, analytic, and diagnostic scoring, although not representing absolute values, do provide specific information about student performance. They can be used for identifying intervention needs. These three scoring procedures are useful not only for districtwide testing but also for classroom instruction.

ADVANTAGES OF HOLISTIC SCORING

Despite their limitations, the four scales — essay, primary trait, analytic, diagnostic—provide the most successful means for evaluating large quantities of compositions. Benefits gained from using these holistic scoring procedures include the following:

- Writing instruction is promoted.
- English teachers are brought together to develop evaluation scales, thereby providing opportunities to reach agreement on common goals for the writing program.
- Direct testing of writing is practical and reliable.
- **WRITING SAMPLE TESTS APPEAR TO BE MORE FAIR FOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES** (White & Thomas, 1981).

Time is needed to implement successfully the holistic evaluation procedures. Retraining is required when teachers move from assessment procedures such as short answer, multiple choice to complex assessment procedures for evaluating writing samples.

DISTRICT TESTING

CHAPTER VII

PLANNING FOR DISTRICTWIDE EVALUATION OF COMPOSITIONS

OBJECTIVE

EDUCATORS WILL DEVELOP PLANS FOR EVALUATING WRITING SAMPLES IN DISTRICTWIDE TESTING.

WHAT PROCEDURES CAN BE USED TO DEVELOP EVALUATION SCALES?

When school district personnel begin developing evaluation scales, these procedures give direction

- Develop prompts (see pages 28-33).
- Select prompts best suited for eliciting good writing.
- Field test prompts at selected grade levels.
- Mask students' names on papers or code papers.
- Read papers, placing papers in four to eight separate stacks from highest to lowest.
- Describe orally the major characteristics of each stack of papers.
- Record oral descriptions.
- Refine descriptions.

Refined descriptive statements form the evaluation scale. An average paper (never the best or worst) of each stack, that is, the most representative of each section of the descriptive narrative, is selected as a training paper for other readers (teachers, administrators, supervisors, or lay readers). The above method can be used for developing formative or summative evaluation scales.

PLANNING FOR LARGE SCALE EVALUATION

Planning is critical for successful use of writing samples in districtwide testing.

PLANNING IS NEEDED FOR...

A. Overall Organization

- Select test option (see p. 61).
- Establish a timeline for activities.
- Devise and validate test.
- Provide adequate budget to achieve desired goals of testing program using writing samples.

- Determine all costs of reading compositions (including post-test activities, such as publication of sample papers and scoring guides).
- Establish a system for combining and recording scores.
- Reserve space to store large quantities of paper: test items, instructions, and the writing samples.
- Determine what kind of information about the test will be given to students ahead of time.
- Provide a system for concealing students' names.
- Provide a system for concealing scores of the first reading.
- Plan parental and community public relations program to report results of test.
- Establish procedures whereby students have the privilege of reviewing their tests, challenging the results, and changing the results when deemed to be inaccurate.

B. Administering the Writing Sample

- Determine length of test, how many essay questions to be used, what kind.
- Identify time and place for test.
- Control the testing environment.
- Articulate instructions for administering the test.
- Specify clear directions within writing prompt.
- Establish procedures for safeguarding test materials.
- Articulate and record test specifications.

C. Evaluating the Compositions

- Select time, dates, and site for evaluating compositions (may need to be reserved months ahead).
- Determine relative weights of multiple-choice test and writing sample (if they are to be combined).
- Recruit and assign appropriate personnel for tasks to be completed.

D. Reporting and Interpreting the Results

- Use help of personnel with statistical or psychometric training.
- Establish a system for reporting and interpreting information to teachers and students.
- Report and interpret scores to various publics and the press.

DISTRICT TESTING

E. Planning for the Future

- Use test results for immediate program adjustment and teacher inservice planning.
- Develop procedures for selecting current and future evaluators.
- Establish procedures for keeping abreast of writing research.
- Continue to develop new topics based on the model of successful past topics.
- Keep records for five-year course of study review.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS VERSUS WRITING SAMPLES

As school district personnel are developing their competency-based education program for English composition, the options for district-wide testing are

Option 1. Use writing samples only.
Option 2. Use multiple-choice tests only.
Option 3. Use both a writing sample and multiple-choice test.

Before making these choices, many factors must be weighed. In a study conducted by the College Board titled *The Measurement of Writing Ability* (Godshalk, Swineford, and Coffman, 1966), the data showed that using a combination of both multiple-choice items and a writing sample was better for evaluating writing skills than either method alone *at first*. Most colleges and universities in Ohio and throughout the nation have added a writing sample to entrance requirements in addition to using results from multiple-choice tests.

Testing more than anything else shapes curriculum. Testing decisions determine instructional patterns. Consider the effect multiple-choice tests have upon the curriculum. Multiple-choice tests

- deny the importance of developing composition skills
- defeat the purposes of teaching literature
- eliminate creativity
- create avoidance of individualized instruction
- have high development costs
- require constant security
- have lower validity
- limit curriculum
- devalue actual writing in students' minds

COST

COST FACTORS

Cost factors often determine decisions relative to test selection. One must take into account the value received through the writing sample procedure. The writing sample provides the following benefits:

- Teachers' instruction and evaluation skills are improved.
- A balanced, integrated English language arts curriculum is maintained.
- Students' writing skills are increased.

In addition White (1985) notes

> ...grading [compositions] often looms as a particularly forbidding problem. Many...faculty remember the hostile red marks their student work received from the [teachers] of their youth. Sensibly enough, they resist that model, but since it is the only model most of them know, they then feel that they simply cannot grade student writing in a respectable way. Sometimes that feeling alone prevents good writers and excellent teachers in the various disciplines from teaching writing. And, since writing is one of the principal means by which students learn anything the entire educational enterprise suffers.
>
> Participation in holistic group scoring tends to break down this destructive attitude toward the grading and teaching of writing. It also, of course, leads to discussion of standards and many other matters. When the instructor takes the scoring guides from the group grading session back to the classroom, the benefits of the procedure multiply. Now the students as well gain from the process. They begin to internalize the standards for evaluation, which they can use in revision; they become more able readers of their own drafts; and they can see that better writing is both definable and attainable (p. 142).

For purposes of instruction and curriculum, multiple-choice tests provide limited benefits to students and teachers as compared to the benefits derived from a writing sample. Multiple-choice tests partially measure grammar, language facts, spelling, and editing. They do not, however, measure the three most important characteristics of good writing: composing, style, and expression. Writing combines skills knowledge and creative input.

RELIABILITY

When making choices for types of tests, school district personnel generally consider financial costs of each form of testing. Most educators have come to believe that multiple-choice tests are less expensive than writing samples since scoring can be accomplished by running answer sheets through a computer. This belief may be a misconception. Often overlooked is the cost of development of multiple-choice tests; it is enormously expensive and time consuming if conducted properly to assure validity and reliability of test items. Furthermore, multiple-choice tests must be kept up to date. **Truth-in-testing legislation requires constant reevaluation of test items and revision of test forms to assure that items are current and nondiscriminatory.**

RELIABILITY FACTORS RELATIVE TO COMPOSITION READINGS

Early attempts at developing reliable composition testing procedures met with little success. As more test developers turned to composition testing, however, they identified factors that assured better reliability. They also identified specific constraints to composition scoring. School district personnel using compositions (writing samples) for districtwide testing must be sure that

- a carefully developed and precise prompt is used
- attempts are made to reduce unnecessary variability in the scoring process

Identified procedures and practices that assure high reliability include

Controlling the Reading Situation

- reading all compositions in the same place at the same time with the same working hours and breaks
- eliminating extraneous variables
- establishing a positive social situation
- establishing a sense of community

Using a Scoring Scale (also known as "rubric")

- containing direct statements of descriptors for papers at different points on the scoring scale
- being immediately accessible and understood by each reader

Using Sample Papers (also known as "anchor papers" or "range finders")

- describing points on the criteria scale
- selecting of papers accomplished before readers arrive

RELIABILITY

- providing the basis for open discussion of papers and qualities (sample papers given to readers and used for scoring during the training sessions)
- having agreement on scores within a narrow range
- helping readers internalize the scoring during the training session
- using for retraining sessions after each break when scoring time exceeds more than half a day

Maintaining the Standards

- circulating an experienced table leader among six or seven readers
- assuring scoring remains at the same level
- renumbering periodically and scoring already completed papers
- appointing a chief leader to resolve problems when more than one table of readers is used

Providing for Multiple Independent Scoring

- providing two readers from two different tables to score each essay independently
- allowing for one point difference between two scores
- requiring a third reader to resolve discrepancy
- requiring at least a five percent or less discrepancy score with "excellent" reading sessions
- requiring at least seven to ten percent discrepancy scores with "average" reading sessions

Record Keeping

- requiring records of scoring done by individual readers
- allowing for the reuse of the most reliable readers (Murphy, 1983; White, 1985; et al.)

Assessment procedures vital to teaching writing are quite different from tests evaluating segregated skills. In *Teaching and Assessing Writing* (1985), White states,

> When the testing of writing is done properly, it supports teaching both practically and conceptually, involves teachers in test planning and test design, and helps bring recent discoveries about the teaching of writing into the classroom (p.2).

For school district personnel who wish to have more in-depth information about reliability and validity in composition testing, please see chapters 2 and 9 of White's book.

COMPUTERS FOR REPORTING

Variables other than the quality of writing within a writing sample impinge upon the reliability of the readings. Free and open discussion of these variables during the training session will lead to greater reliability. Variables within the writing sample that influence scoring include

- quality of the handwriting
- writer's expressed values as different from the reader's values
- agreement or disagreement with writer's point of view
- errors in conventions of writing (capitalization, punctuation, grammatical usage, and spelling)
- length of composition (excessively long or short)
- identification of the writer from something said in the composition

Environmental factors that influence scoring include

- the group leader or table leaders
- respect for professionalism among leaders and readers
- comfort level of environment (temperature, extraneous sounds, types of chairs, and so forth)
- length of time for all readings

USING COMPUTERS TO REPORT RESULTS OF HOLISTIC EVALUATIONS OF COMPOSITIONS

School districts using computers for reporting purposes may be hesitant to use writing samples; however, readers' score sheets can be developed for computer scanning. Computers can be programmed to combine scores and provide reports to teachers, parents, and students.

Youngstown City School District has developed a scan sheet on which Youngstown City and Mahoning County Schools can report scores and provide programmed paragraphs describing expectations for characteristics on the scoring guide. This scan sheet is used to (1) monitor double readings; (2) identify discrepant readings requiring a third reading; (3) identify consistent, effective readers; (4) print student scores; and (5) provide "written" comments about each student's writing strengths and weaknesses.

COMPUTERS FOR REPORTING

These scan sheets were developed cooperatively by Ken Mineo of Youngstown City Schools and Gratia Murphy of Youngstown State University to implement the ARETE′ (the Greek word for excellence but also the acronym for *A*ssessment and *R*evitalization *E*fforts for the *T*eaching of *E*nglish) program. Further information about developing computer scan sheets can be obtained from Ken Mineo, Computer Center, Youngstown Public Schools. Columbus City Schools has also developed similar capabilities for its computer. Samples of the ARETE′ input data and scoring sheets follow. Note the assignment and use of codes for confidentiality.

Figure 17. **Writing Evaluation Input Data Form Used in Youngstown City Schools and Youngstown State University**

WRITING EVALUATION INPUT DATA

Building Name: _____ Date: _____

Building Code: _____

Teacher Name: _____

Teacher Code: _____

* *

STUDENT NAME ***(20 CHARACTERS)***	STUDENT NUMBER ****(4 DIGITS)****
_____	_ _ _ _
_____	_ _ _ _
_____	_ _ _ _
_____	_ _ _ _
_____	_ _ _ _

and so forth

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COMPUTERS FOR REPORTING

Figure 18. **Writing Test Evaluation Form for Computer Used at Youngstown State University**

WRITING TEST EVALUATION FORM

PLEASE ENTER DATA VERTICALLY IN PARENTHESES
AND MARK CORRESPONDING VALUE.

SCHOOL CODE

( )-A--B--C--D--E--F--G--H--I--J--K--L--M--N--O--P--Q--R--S--T--U--V--W--X--Y--Z--*----
( )-A--B--C--D--E--F--G--H--I--J--K--L--M--N--O--P--Q--R--S--T--U--V--W--X--Y--Z--*----
( )-A--B--C--D--E--F--G--H--I--J--K--L--M--N--O--P--Q--R--S--T--U--V--W--X--Y--Z--*----

STUDENT CODE	( )	-0-	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
	( )	-0-	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
	( )	-0-	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
	( )	-0-	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
TEACHER CODE	( )	-0-	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
	( )	-0-	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
	( )	-0-	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
EVALUATOR CODE	( )	-0-	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
	( )	-0-	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
	( )	-0-	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-

---TRAIT SCORES---

	--LOW--	---MIDDLE---					--HIGH--	
PURPOSE	( )	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-
DIRECTION	( )	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-
IDEAS	( )	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-
STYLE	( )	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-
PRESENTATION	( )	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-

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NUMBER OF EVALUATION SCALES TO BE DEVELOPED

For assessment and intervention, classroom teachers may need to develop a variety of scales to coincide with the types and styles of writing required in the course of study. Some scales may need to be developed across the district at grade levels; other scales may be developed by individual teachers as needs arise to deal with a particular writing skill. The number of scales to be developed is based upon the district policy on competency and testing. See Implementation Series document *Competency Assessment and Testing* (1983a) for full details about districtwide testing requirements.

EVALUATION SCALES CHANGE OVER TIME

Each year evaluation scales for districtwide testing will necessitate changes in the scales since prompts and sample papers will be different. As school district personnel work through the districtwide evaluation process and keep up with recent research, they will increasingly recognize evaluative concerns and the need for improving evaluation scales. Growth and learning are natural outcomes of experiencing and working with new concepts. As school personnel gain experience with evaluating compositions, they will discover ways to (1) improve the prompts; (2) administer the writing test; (3) develop better evaluation procedures; and (4) improve evaluation scales.

USEFULNESS OF DISTRICT HANDBOOK ON EVALUATING COMPOSITIONS

Establishing common agreement and maintaining that agreement can be enhanced by developing a district handbook on composition evaluation. Using the procedures described earlier in this document relative to developing evaluation scales, school district personnel could provide all teachers with a handbook that includes

- a written description of each category and/or each level of the category
- a student paper selected as a "range finder" ("anchor paper") demonstrating qualities defined in each category and at each level

An example of *one category* on an analytic scale with the *written description of each level* of that category is shown below. Sample papers demonstrating levels follow. The scale represented is a 7-point scale.

CATEGORY: **PURPOSE** (student has control of topic and awareness of audience)

LEVEL: HIGH. The writer not only understands the assignment, but also fulfills it with imagination and creativity. The writing demonstrates that the author is always in firm control of the subject and treats it clearly and completely. The writer has a developed awareness of who the audience is, and not only informs, but also entertains or even persuades that audience. The writer's intentions are made clear to the reader throughout the essay. (Score range: 6-7)

Figure 19. **Sample High Paper**

Student's Actual Writing (Category — **Purpose**)

Collecting as a passion is evident in all walks of life, all types of people—from New York to San Fran, from London to Tokyo, collecting is evident everywhere. In fact, there is probably one collector for every two people on our block. Take Rob for example.

Rob is an average high school student. He likes reading, sports, drama, and is involved in various school organizations. He does well in his classes and usually makes the honor roll. But, there is another side to Rob that not many know of: a side that is dark and mysterious, a side that collects and breeds the collection, a side that is only Rob's, a side that has a passion for cockroaches.

Rob's cockroach days started a few years back when his older sister went away to college and Rob got his sister's attic bedroom. As soon as he moved in, he noticed one single cockroach half dead on the windowsill. Rob approached cautiously and carefully and managed to nurse the cockroach back to health. From then on, Rob's life has been filled with cockroaches.

Rob still has that one cockroach he once saved. And (added to) that, he also has 5,000,000 more, all trained as well as any dog. Rob has made a business of his cockroaches. He owns the world's only "Cockroach Follies" and he trains cockroaches as pets for unfortunates who live in the ghettos. In fact, Rob already has three bank accounts before he has even graduated! Maybe he's got something there. If he can collect cockroaches maybe we can collect...

COMMENT:

This paper illustrates a type of student composition which initially may generate a negative response from the reader. The topic is so outrageous that a teacher might conclude the student "is obviously just fooling around." While labeling the writing as "lacking a serious tone" might be valid, the writing, seen in the context in which it was given and completed, is an example of writing which exhibits a high level of purpose in that the writer reveals intent, writes with a specific audience in mind, and develops his/her own persona.

There are several ways in which the writer specifies the audience. First, the writer selects a topic which is hardly serious and proceeds to treat it in a half-serious fashion. The resulting satire is seasoned by tongue-in-cheek humor and a host of supporting elements. The author's choice of Rob, collector of cockroaches, would be as amusing to the reader who recognizes the satire as it would be disconcerting to the reader who might interpret the writer's efforts as a serious attempt to present a factual narrative. All features that the writer includes—the use of hyperbole in sentences such as "...one collector for every two people on the block" or having "5,000,000" plus one cockroach; the parallelism of phrases and use of climax at the end of the second paragraph; another climax which grows out of the contrast between the ordinary, almost quaint aspects of Rob's life (paragraphs 1-2) and the projected extremities of his life (final paragraph); even the ellipsis at the end—are signals of the writer's sensitivity to what the audience (teacher) expects, tolerates, and even enjoys.

Secondly, the writer has a voice, a point of view, an identity. While the choice of words is not exceptional, it is adequate given the subject matter and development. There are few surprises in terms of diction. The writer's skill appears more in his/her ability to use the commonplace in an uncommon way. Successful satire must be believable, and the writer's usage makes the writing just that. Phrases such as "cockroach days," "life filled with cockroaches," "passion for cockroaches," and "cockroach follies" shape the presentation and give evidence of his/her intention in writing—to entertain the reader. Perhaps the writer gives away more of the self than intended in the comment about Rob's training cockroaches as pets for ghetto residents. In addition to being entertaining, the writer seems to be injecting a personal note.

A senior high school or junior high school teacher must appreciate how easy it is for a topic like this to get out of hand; the subtleties of the first two paragraphs, in the hands of a lesser writer, might have degenerated into slapstick comedy or silliness by the final sentence. Our writer, however, keeps his/her head. Even the final comment reminds the reader that virtually anything can be collected, for collecting is an attitude, not a process, and the collector is a person, not a performer.

It is reasonable to conclude that the author understands the assignment but fulfills it with imagination and creativity. He/she is always in firm control of the subject and treats it clearly and completely. The author directs the writing toward an audience of teachers, entertains them, and as he/she progresses in the writing, his/her intentions are made clear, even to the final ellipsis. (Reprinted by permission of Gratia Murphy, Youngstown State University).

LEVEL: MIDDLE. The writer makes an attempt to fulfill the task at hand, and the work is done in a competent, although mundane and uninspired way. There are few surprises for the reader who can fairly well predict both the content and the outcome of the essay. The writer does not seem to have a clear awareness of who the audience is. The focus of the essay may drift somewhat from beginning to end, giving the impression that the writer is not always in full control of the topic or purpose, although there may be some refocusing and redirecting toward the end of the piece. (Score range: 3-4-5)

Figure 20. **Sample Middle Paper**

Student's Actual Writing
(Category — **Purpose**)

One reason people collect things is to broaden their horizons in certain areas. For example, collecting pen pals. Collecting pen pals can be a fun and enriching experience. In the United States, it is interesting to learn, through pen pals, that many teens have the same feelings on many issues. It is also fun to find out what different hobbies others have because of where they live—such as hockey in Boston, skiing in Colorado, or just "bumming around," in California. Having pen friends across America can help to build a nationwide friendship among the youth of our country. It can help us understand different cultures of people and their lifestyles, and as the youth in our country become pen pals with youth in other countries, it can help to build, in its own way, a friendly bond between nations. So, as one can see, collecting pen pals can be a very fun and interesting experience, helping the collector to understand and become friends with many different and exciting individuals.

COMMENT:

This student writer tried to give the testers just what he/she probably believed all teachers want—safe, grammatically correct, mundane pap. This paper is typical of those adequately fulfilling pedagogical (or the "assigned") purpose, while failing to consider intrinsic (or "real") purpose. The writer is well aware of "topic sentence," "conclusion," and all the mechanics between. Had the writer just developed the "fun" of pen pals or the "hobbies others have" relative to their home states, the reader could assume an audience of other teens, and purpose of persuading them to try writing to pen pals. Also, the phrase "same feelings on many issues," while intriguing, is not pursued. Worse, once the writer starts on "enrichment" and "reward," the writer's tone and focus shift to become increasingly pedantic.

Although this shift may be an attempt to go beyond personal to the universal experience, it fails here because the paper starts with generalization, not one specific collection and the collector, and therefore cannot be further generalized. The reader then is assaulted with vauge cliches like "nationwide friendship among the youth of our country," and "friendly bond between nations." No specifics at all are offered in this section of the paper. No reader could be convinced by it that collecting pen pals is "very fun and interesting," because no experiences are shared or examples given. Finally, "many different and exciting individuals" in the conclusion would have been more appropriate had even a single "different, exciting individual" been mentioned —had any individual, in fact, been mentioned. This paper is generally competent, uninspired, and dull; it is beautifully average in its lack of purpose. (Part of the problem, it must be admitted, lies in the assignment which specified no particular audience, and thereby placed all responsibility for audience on this unsuspecting writer.) [Reprinted by permission of Gratia Murphy, Youngstown State University.]

LEVEL: LOW. The writer either does not understand what the assignment demands, or else begins on target, but drifts quickly from the focus and intended purpose. The writing starts in one place and ends up someplace else. The writer obviously does not know who the audience is, and rarely even addresses a particular audience. Organization, also, is considerably lacking. There is little, if any, sense that the writer has any interest either in the subject or in the task at hand. There is often no attempt to entertain or even inform the reader. (Score range: 1-2)

Figure 21. **Sample Low Paper**

Student's Actual Writing
(Category — **Purpose**)

One reason people collect things is because it may have a special meaning in their life. Take for example love letters from the past. I have notes from my last love. There are two shoe boxes full of these letters lying underneath my bed. These letters have a special meaning to me in a way that, I knew that I was terribly needed by a person who I adored and loved.

This person needed help when I first met him. It cried out to me, and I soon felt the desire to help. He and I soon began to write back and forth in the summer. He wouldexplain his problems, and I acted as a crutch, and answered his letters with information that would seemingly help him. We soon began to help each other. He had seen my weaknesses also. He knew I needed help too. The days, weeks, and months passed by in the summer. I noticed a great change in his character and attitude in his letters. He was a whole new person waiting to step out into the world alone. He told me many times, that he yearned to taste life again, out on his own. I cringed at the thought of loosing such a dear friend. I realized that he wasn't just a friend, but a person that I truly loved. Now, he wants to leave, and I can't stop him.

A few weeks went past since I received a letter from him. I knew deep down inside that he had left to find a new life. A life that would be more fulfilling. I sadened to think of him. He was lost forever, to me.

Months past, and I hid from my problems. I had no one to turn to. I ran from my problems I needed him back.

One day, I received a small letter in the mail. I couldn't even guess who sent it. I carefully studied the envelope for days, I was afraid to open it. Afraid that it might bring bad news, so I avoided it.

Until, one day, my dear friend knocked on my door. He said 3 words, "Open the envelope."

With him at the door, I opened it. Only to find a diamond ring attached to a note that said, "I love you."

This is why the note collection is so dear to me. It has a meaning that can't be described in words, and it can't be measured.

To this day, the 2 boxes full of notes still hides underneath my bed, telling me of the life that I so desired to lead.

DISTRICT HANDBOOK

COMMENT:

This essay is considered to exemplify a "low" in purpose. Although it does appear to fulfill the assignment, and it does stick to one topic throughout most of the essay, it does not exhibit any sense of audience. The author merely seems to be writing a personal diary-like entry instead of directing her writing to an audience of any kind. The essay is written from a totally personal point of view. In addition, the writer drifts from the actual assignment given and seems to "lose herself" in her writing. She never does attempt to actually describe a collection. The few introductory statements which are made about collections are never really developed or addressed again throughout the rambling course of the essay. (Reprinted by permission of Gratia Murphy, Youngstown State University.)

Other categories on this scale include **Direction** (organization), **Ideas** (originality, insight), **Style** (intervention and manipulation of language), and **Presentation** (correctness). For each of these categories, a high, middle, and low written description could be provided in the handbook.

The district handbook also would contain samples of student work for each level (high, middle, low) of each category of the district scale. For the above ARETE′ scale, fifteen student papers (five categories with three levels each) at each grade level would be selected as examples of the written descriptions. The Youngstown State University publication *Teacher to Teacher* contains the full text of the ARETE′ scale, samples of student papers, comments about each, full descriptions of the traits, and research relevant to the traits.

Finneytown Local School District personnel have developed a composition handbook for their teachers at each grade level (McHugh and Wilson, 1985). The handbook serves as a reference for evaluating compositions throughout the school year.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

CHAPTER VIII

GRADING AND REPORTING TO PARENTS

OBJECTIVE

EDUCATORS WILL RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF USING COMPOSITIONS FOR MULTIPLE EVALUATIONS.

HOW CAN TEACHERS HANDLE GRADING AND REPORTING TO PARENTS?

GRADING COMPOSITIONS IN PROCESS

Traditional reporting constraints are not compatible with what is known about teaching and learning using the writing process. The revision of multiple drafts and several composition assignments at various stages necessitates a form of assessment which takes into consideration the draft progress and process as well as completed compositions. Some grading suggestions compatible with the writing process are

- giving credit for work in progress by checking work up to required deadlines; a check mark system might be appropriate
- evaluating quality of writing rather than quantity of writing
- selecting three or four compositions for grading each grading period
- giving credit for each draft
- using notes about compositions to give credit for progress
- using checklists (self, peer, teacher) for each draft as sources for determining grade
- involving student in determining a grade
- keeping copies of drafts, analyzing progress, and assigning grade for work in progress

The following operational factors within the writing process must be considered when grading:

- All compositions may not be completed within the artificial boundaries of a grading period; some compositions will overlap into other grading periods.
- Some compositions may never be completed.
- Artificial numbers of expected compositions in any grading period may not be realistic; a few well-written compositions achieve more learning goals than many poorly written compositions.

GRADING

Mistakes in writing do not always mean a deficiency; they may mean a student

- needs more help
- needs more time to grow
- is attempting to acquire a more difficult new skill, i.e., is extending a skill into a higher-order cognitive task

GRADING IN AN INTEGRATED PROGRAM

Total language development is the major goal of the English language arts program. Reading and composition are subcomponents of language development. Spelling and grammatical usage are subcomponents of composition; handwriting skill is a basic life need necessary for written communication.

Multiple evaluations based on one composition are consistent with an integrated approach. These multiple evaluations can be used to meet school district requirements for evaluations of several components of the English language arts curricular area. Teachers can evaluate one composition (final draft only) for handwriting, spelling, and English or language arts. In addition, evaluations for part of the reading grade can be given when students are asked to read what they have written. Research indicates that reading improves when students read what they have composed.

To assure the teaching of all components of English language arts, school districts will sometimes require separate grades for spelling, handwriting, English language arts, and reading. The multiple evaluation approach to one composition facilitates the integration of English language arts while enabling teachers to meet district requirements. Composition should be an integral part of language development. It may be that in an integrated approach to English language arts with composition as the core activity, one grade for English language arts will suffice. Separate grades may be required, then, only for reading and for the comprehensive area of the language arts.

PUPIL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

CHAPTER IX

PUPIL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES AND WRITING EXPERIENCES

OBJECTIVE

EDUCATORS WILL DEVELOP PUPIL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES THAT PROMOTE WRITING.

WHAT KIND OF PUPIL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES SUPPORT WRITING?

PUPIL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR WRITING SAMPLES

Care should be taken to write pupil performance objectives that support writing instruction. Emphasis on substance of writing rather than form is essential. If the major goal of English composition is to develop better writers, students need to write and receive specific instruction about the writing. Assessing and testing to meet this goal should be based upon pupil performance objectives requiring a writing sample. An example of this type of pupil performance objective could be stated,

> Given a prompt, students will write a discourse and receive at least a score of *x* in each category of (school district's name) analytic scale (Palumbo, 1984).

This pupil performance objective emphasizes substance rather than form only. It is general and covers all styles/modes and types of writing. Assignments based upon general pupil performance objectives require the use of specific evaluation scales and their level descriptors for assessment of each product. In this sense the evaluation categories become quasi-pupil performance objectives.

The above pupil performance objective is appropriate for districtwide testing and classroom use when it is desired to train students for a testing situation. Another pupil performance objective appropriate for this dual purpose could be stated,

> Given a prompt and without the aid of dictionary, thesaurus, and style manual (grammar textbook), students will write a discourse within *x* minutes without opportunities for peer and teacher response and receive at least a score of *x* in each category of the (school district name) rubric.

PUPIL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Pupil performance objectives that support the writing process in the classroom for ongoing assessment and intervention purposes could be stated,

> Given the opportunity to select a topic, students will write a discourse using the writing processes and receive at least a score of *x* in each category of the (school district name) rubric.
>
> Given the opportunity to select a topic and with the aid of a dictionary, thesaurus, and style manual (grammar textbook), students will write a discourse using the writing processes and receive at least a score of *x* in each category of the (school district name) (analytic, diagnostic, or primary trait) scale.

This type of pupil performance objective is relatively simple to write; however, the development of the required evaluation scale is more involved and time consuming. Sufficient time must be allowed for developing scales that carefully delineate the qualitative characteristics of good writing. Procedures for developing scales are outlined in Chapter VI of this document.

The following example illustrates another type of pupil performance objective that promotes writing:

> Given selected topics, students will write a narrative story and receive at least a score of 5 on an 8-point scale in each category of (school district's name) analytic scale.

This pupil performance objective is *specific to a style (mode) and a type of writing;* it requires a story (type) written in a narrative manner (style/mode). Decisions relative to specificity in pupil performance objectives are directly tied to decisions occurring with prompt development and district decisions about writing requirements. The English language arts course of study will also be a determining factor for decision making relative to writing composition pupil performance objectives.

Some types of pupil performance objectives appear to emphasize the substance of writing but emphasize instead the form of writing. Examples of this latter type of pupil performance objective are

> Given a topic, students will write a paragraph that contains at least three sentences.
>
> Given a topic, students will write a five-paragraph theme with opening paragraph, three supporting paragraphs, and concluding paragraph.

SKILL INSTRUCTION

Even though the above pupil performance objectives appear to support the substance of writing, they do not. The first example emphasizes paragraph form rather than substance; the second example emphasizes the form of five-paragraph themes not the substance within the themes. Additional criteria must be added to put the emphasis upon substance, for example,

> Given a topic, students will write a five-paragraph theme with opening paragraph, three supporting paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph and receive at least a score of *x* in each category of (school district's name) analytic scale.

PUPIL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS

A pupil performance objective such as the one below is not conducive to the promotion of writing but is appropriate for multiple-choice, short-answer testing.

> Given ten sentences, the student will select the correct subject and verb agreement at least 80% of the time.

Ten to thirty pupil performance objectives would be appropriate at each grade level if multiple-choice testing is selected.

INDIVIDUALIZED SKILL INSTRUCTION WITHIN COMPOSITIONS

Questions remain about when it is developmentally appropriate to teach many of the writing skills. Textbooks and tradition, more than anything else, have set the instructional patterns for introducing skills. With no research information available, textbook writers established what they believed to be appropriate skills at grade levels. As noted in the section "Establishing the Curriculum" of the leadership document *Integrating Language Arts* (1985a), tradition and textbook reliance may need to be challenged. The leadership document *English Language Arts Curriculum*, Chapter III (1985b), provides further information on writing research.

Researchers have discovered that students will experiment with new forms, techniques, and skills in their writing without formal instruction in those forms, techniques, and skills. The experimenting has been caused by what has been seen in their reading and other students' writings. As students experiment on their own, teachers provide individualized instruction needed to help students clarify the correct application of those skills.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

CHAPTER X

PROGRAM EVALUATION

OBJECTIVE

EDUCATORS WILL BECOME AWARE OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR WRITING PROGRAM EVALUATION.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR WRITING PROGRAM EVALUATION?

RESOURCES

An in-depth discussion of writing program evaluation lies beyond the scope and space of this leadership document. Published information relative to writing program evaluation became available in the 1980s. School personnel responsible for evaluating the writing program are referred to the following publications:

Teaching and Assessing Writing by Edward M. White, Jossey-Bass, Inc., 433 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94104. Chapters 9 and 10 provide useful insights relative to evaluating writing programs.

The Evaluation of Composition Instruction by Barbara Cross Davis, et al. This 229-page volume is available only by direct mail from Edgepress, Box 69, Pt. Reyes, CA 94956. This book reports the effectiveness of the Bay Area Writing Project. It contains the most extensive evaluation of a writing program and remains the most comprehensive single source at all levels of sophistication. It contains definitions of concepts and terms, presents case studies of evaluations, discusses methodologies, and provides twenty-five pages of model questionnaires.

Evaluating College Writing Programs by Stephen P. Witte and Lester Faigley is less comprehensive than the above book but is more readable. One valuable part of this book is its five-level view of the components of a writing program: cultural and social context, institutional context, program structure and administration, content or curriculum, and instruction. Available through Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, IL.

An article in *College Composition and Communication*, "Evaluating Instruction in Writing: Approaches and Instruments" (1982), reports teacher effectiveness in relation to the teaching of writing. A series of evaluation forms is provided for use by those involved in the evaluation of writing teachers.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

A report titled *Research in Effective Teaching of Writing: Final Report* will be published by the National Institute of Education, Washington, DC. This research by Edward M. White and L. Polin will present university program features associated with success or the lack thereof. It will be a resource for questionnaires and writing topics.

A checklist is provided in the appendix. School personnel may use it to evaluate the district writing program.

SUMMARY

Writing is recursive, not sequential. The writing process is consistent with a competency-based education program, providing for assessment and intervention throughout the process. Reliable and valid prompts as well as high interrater reliability can be developed as educators work through their competency programs. Valuable inservice training that contributes directly to improved instruction in composition results from teachers working together to develop meaningful writing assignments, to delineate qualitative features of good writing, to develop evaluation scales for school district use, and to evaluate student writings. These benefits should be thoughtfully weighed by Ohio school district personnel as they develop their competency-based education programs for English composition.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Self-Appraisal Checklist for Evaluating Writing Programs

I. MOTIVATION FOR STUDENTS TO WRITE

Possible score: 24 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Schoolwide encouragement for teachers to engage occasionally in the same writing assignments they ask of their students?	4	3	2	1
2. Opportunities for students to address topics appropriate to their interests and levels of knowledge?	4	3	2	1
3. Prewriting activities?	4	3	2	1
4. Positive reactions by teachers to anything in the writing process that students do well?	4	3	2	1
5. The avoidance of excessive attention to correctness early in the process of teaching students to write?	4	3	2	1
6. Opportunities for students to watch adults engage in the writing process?	4	3	2	1

II. THE WRITING PROCESS

A. PREWRITING — THE FIRST STAGE

Possible score: 20 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

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How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Time for students to reflect and to develop their confidence and fluency?	4	3	2	1
2. Time for students to define an audience during the prewriting stage?	4	3	2	1
3. A variety of prewriting experiences, such as displays of student work, brainstorming, clustering, dramatic activities, field trips, interviewing, and the use of audiovisual materials?	4	3	2	1

ERRATUM

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APPENDIX

4. Opportunities for students to talk to each other and to the teacher about their writing and their plans for writing?	4	3	2	1
5. A classroom environment with sufficient space and materials to stimulate writing activities?	4	3	2	1

B. WRITING — ONE STAGE IN THE PROCESS

WRITING TO DEVELOP FLUENCY

Possible score: 32 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Both individual and group writing activities?	4	3	2	1
2. Oral language experiences as a precursor to writing, especially for beginners and for language minority students?	4	3	2	1
3. Occasional experiences that allow students to write without having to be concerned about evaluation, editing, or critiques?	4	3	2	1
4. Occasional writing experiences designed to promote quantity of production quickly at a single sitting?	4	3	2	1
5. Opportunities for students to gain confidence in the value and supply of their own ideas by writing in such forms as stream-of-consciousness writing, sensory reporting, diaries, journals, learning logs, and dialogues?	4	3	2	1
6. Occasional writing experiences in all curricular areas?	4	3	2	1
7. Writing experiences for which students know they will be the sole audience?	4	3	2	1
8. Opportunities for students to dictate to another person who records the first draft?	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX

WRITING FOR AN AUDIENCE

Possible score: 16 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Opportunities for students to write for various audiences, other than the teacher, including themselves as in journals and diaries.	4	3	2	1
2. Learning opportunities to help students realize the importance of identifying their audiences before they begin to write?	4	3	2	1
3. Opportunities to improve students' sense of audience by writing in various modes such as letters (of complaint to an editor, to friends and family, and so forth), essays, reports, announcements, brief narratives and descriptions, articles, plays, poems, biographies, autobiographies, instructions, research papers, and news stories?	4	3	2	1
4. Opportunities to improve their sense of audience by writing about the same subject in different forms, as appropriate, to several different audiences?	4	3	2	1

WRITING WITH PURPOSE

Possible score: 24 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Opportunities for students to write for a variety of purposes?	4	3	2	1
2. Opportunities for students to study various models of writing which exemplify differing purposes for writing?	4	3	2	1
3. Encouragement for students to determine the purpose of their writing during the prewriting stage?	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX

4. Encouragement for students to reconsider during the revision stage the purpose of what they have written?	4	3	2	1
5. Assignments in which students are directed to determine the author's purpose in various reading selections?	4	3	2	1
6. Assignments in which students write to several different audiences with a single purpose in mind and to a single audience for varied purposes?	4	3	2	1

C. RESPONDING — REACTING TO WHAT WAS WRITTEN

Possible score: 16 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Opportunities for students to help and support each other by exchanging written and oral responses to their writing?	4	3	2	1
2. Class sessions during which the better sections of students' work is read aloud for the enjoyment and enlightenment of the class and for purposes of illustrating what constitutes better writing?	4	3	2	1
3. Encouragement for students to monitor their own writing development through a periodic review of their papers?	4	3	2	1
4. Responses to student writing which focus on its content before attention is directed to problems students may have with the conventions of writing?	4	3	2	1

D. REVISING — REEXAMINING WHAT WAS WRITTEN

Possible score: 16 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Opportunities for students to revise papers based on the responses of teachers, peers, or others before the papers are formally evaluated?	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX

2. Instruction in revision skills such as adding detail and omitting repetition?	4	3	2	1
3. Opportunities for reconsidering such matters as point of view, tone, voice, and audience?	4	3	2	1
4. Practice with the four revision skills of addition, deletion, substitution, and rearrangement?	4	3	2	1

E. EDITING — REFINING WHAT WAS WRITTEN

Possible score: 16 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Opportunities for students and teachers to distinguish between revising and editing?	4	3	2	1
2. Opportunities for students to learn to edit their work for the conventions of writing, including grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, and proper manuscript format?	4	3	2	1
3. Opportunities for students to learn to edit their work for errors in diction and syntax?	4	3	2	1
4. Opportunities for students to learn to understand that editing is the final step in refining their papers?	4	3	2	1

F. DEVELOPING SKILL WITH THE CONVENTIONS OF WRITING

Possible score: 20 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Learning opportunities regarding the conventions of writing as the need arises during actual writing activities, rather than isolating them and treating them as a prerequisite to writing instruction?	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX

2. The evaluation of students' mastery of the conventions of writing on the basis of their writing samples rather than relying solely on objective tests covering these conventions?	4	3	2	1
3. Opportunities for students to explore the potential of the English language and to experiment with a variety of ways of correctly expressing their ideas?	4	3	2	1
4. Opportunities for students to present their work to a group of peers for responses, with the option of revising and correcting before submission for evaluation?	4	3	2	1
5. Early identification of students' needs regarding the conventions of writing?	4	3	2	1

G. EVALUATING — JUDGING THE WRITING CONSTRUCTIVELY

Possible score: 36 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Self-evaluation at each stage in the composing process?	4	3	2	1
2. Strategies that will prepare students to evaluate their own writing?	4	3	2	1
3. Peer evaluation of each student's writing?	4	3	2	1
4. Training to enable students to evaluate effectively the writing of their peers?	4	3	2	1
5. The determination of the purpose of an evaluation effort?	4	3	2	1
6. The selection of the most appropriate means for conducting an evaluation such as holistic, analytical, or primary trait scoring?	4	3	2	1
7. Policies that reflect consistent and regular assessment of varied writing tasks?	4	3	2	1
8. The use of student writing samples as a primary means of evaluating the writing?	4	3	2	1
9. Teacher staff development in the evaluation of student writing?	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX

H. POSTWRITING — REALIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING

Possible score: 20 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. The publication of student writing in all curriculum areas in class or school magazines, newspapers, or books?	4	3	2	1
2. Frequent, schoolwide recognition of successful writing by students at all ability levels through public displays, interclass or interschool exchanges, awards, and assemblies?	4	3	2	1
3. Opportunities for students to receive responses from audiences other than the teacher?	4	3	2	1
4. Opportunities for students to enter school, district, community, and national writing competitions?	4	3	2	1
5. Opportunities for students to write and mail letters to friends, relatives, companies, editors, celebrities, political figures, and other audiences?	4	3	2	1

III. IMPLEMENTING A SCHOOLWIDE WRITING PROGRAM

A. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR A SCHOOLWIDE WRITING PROGRAM

Possible score: 44 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. The preparation of a written plan for a schoolwide writing program?	4	3	2	1
2. Schoolwide agreement on the objectives for teaching writing?	4	3	2	1
3. Schoolwide agreement that writing is an important tool for learning in all subjects?	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX

4. Schoolwide agreement that teachers in all content areas at the secondary level have responsibilities to assist with the teaching of writing?	4	3	2	1
5. The encouragement of student writing in all subject areas at the elementary school level?	4	3	2	1
6. The clarification of the purposes and methods for evaluating writing in all content areas?	4	3	2	1
7. Adequate time for writing in all content areas?	4	3	2	1
8. Inservice education programs on the teaching of writing for *all* teachers?	4	3	2	1
9. The involvement of school administrators in the writing program?	4	3	2	1
10. Activities designed to help beginners make the transition from oral to written language?	4	3	2	1
11. Activities designed to elicit student writing in each of the specific subject matter areas included in the school's curriculum?	4	3	2	1

B. STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT WRITING

Possible score: 20 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. The establishment of schoolwide standards regarding the quality of student writing and homework writing?	4	3	2	1
2. Opportunities that will enable students and parents to become aware of these adopted standards?	4	3	2	1
3. Uniform schoolwide application of these standards?	4	3	2	1
4. The establishment of grading policies regarding student work that is in accord with these standards?	4	3	2	1
5. A schoolwide effort to help college-bound students gain the writing skills they need?	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX

C. TEACHING WRITING TO LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENTS

Possible score: 40 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in encouraging schoolwide efforts in the following:

1. Determining the levels of proficiency that language minority students have in both their dominant language and in English?	4	3	2	1
2. Helping language minority students develop skills with the basic features of their dominant language before they are required to write?	4	3	2	1
3. Development of "basic English" skills of language minority students before requiring them to write in English?	4	3	2	1
4. Encouragement for students who have not yet attained facility with "basic English," but who have attained facility with the basic features of their dominant language, to learn about and make use of the stages in the writing process by writing in their dominant language initially?	4	3	2	1
5. Encouragement of students who have begun to attain facility with "basic English" to transfer the skills they have learned and to begin to write in English?	4	3	2	1
6. Provision for appropriate staff development for those who are responsible for helping language minority students learn to write in English?	4	3	2	1
7. Development of appropriate attitudes and behaviors on the part of all who work with language minority students?	4	3	2	1
8. Avoidance of any belittling of students' dominant language, dialect, or culture?	4	3	2	1
9. Extensive prewriting activities and small group work for language minority students?	4	3	2	1
10. Extensive oral language activities for language minority students?	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX

IV. STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN THE TEACHING OF WRITING

Possible score: 32 points
Self-Appraisal score: ____ points

Circle appropriate response:
4 Very effective
3 Effective
2 Somewhat effective
1 Ineffective

How effective is your writing program in providing for:

1. Participation by school staff members in planning and implementing a staff development program in the teaching of writing?	4	3	2	1
2. Staff development programs which are ongoing?	4	3	2	1
3. Staff development programs which occur during the regular teaching day rather than during off duty time?	4	3	2	1
4. The adequacy of staff development trainers in the area of writing?	4	3	2	1
5. Opportunities for participating teachers to experience demonstration teaching, to share ideas with colleagues, and to receive classroom visits and coaching from informed and trusted peers to ensure that they are using newly acquired skills and knowledge in their teaching?	4	3	2	1
6. A professional library on the teaching of writing?	4	3	2	1
7. Adequate support for staff development in the teaching of writing by district and school site administrators, the school board, and the public?	4	3	2	1
8. Encouragement for teachers of writing to participate in appropriate professional organizations, workshops, and conferences?	4	3	2	1

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